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ABSTRACT

This institutional study examined multiple facets of the Wytheville Community College (Virginia) Dual Credit English program and outlines both the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative. The author provides historical data on the rationale for the program and presents perspectives from various constituencies. The study found that both the Community College and high schools are committed to providing dual credit English classes that are of comparable quality to the College's regular freshmen composition courses. Generally, students and graduates reported a high rate of satisfaction with the program. Students saved both time and money by accumulating college credits while still enrolled in high school. Articulation agreements guaranteed the transferability of dual credit English courses to most state-supported colleges and universities. This report also discusses relevant administration issues such as curriculum development, placement policies and procedures, faculty selection, and program evaluation. The final chapter summarizes program successes, identifies concerns (e.g., student and parental understanding of dual credit, academic advising issues, textbook selection and usage), and makes recommendations for improvements in the dual credit English program. Appended are course outlines, interview questions, and the student survey and results. (Contains 26 references.) (RC)

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ED 468 378

DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH:

PROGRAM HISTORY, REVIEW, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by

Rhonda K. Catron

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

Curriculum and Instruction

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Blacksburg, Virginia

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DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH:

PROGRAM HISTORY, REVIEW, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rhonda K. Catron

(ABSTRACT)

Wytheville Community College implemented the Dual Credit English program in 1988 following the Virginia Community College System's adoption of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*. Essentially, the program allows qualified high school seniors to enroll in the college's freshman-level ENG 111: College Composition I and ENG 112: College Composition II courses while simultaneously completing senior English. The guarantee of college credit for students who earn at least a "C" average and other cost-saving and time-saving features have contributed to the increased popularity of the program in recent years. This institutional study examines multiple facets of the program and determines program strengths and weaknesses. The dissertation provides historical data on the rationale for the program and presents perspectives from various constituencies involved in the program, including community college administrators, high school administrators, community college English faculty, dual credit English faculty, program graduates, and currently enrolled dual credit English students.

The study found that both the community college and high schools are committed to providing dual credit English courses that are of comparable quality to the college's regular freshman composition courses. Generally, students and graduates reported a high rate of satisfaction with the program. Students benefit monetarily from the program because the public school systems, not individual students, pay tuition costs. Also, students save time by accumulating college credits while still enrolled in high school and, thus, are often able to complete college degrees in a shorter time frame. Articulation agreements guarantee the transferability of dual credit English courses to most state-supported colleges and universities.

The study also discusses relevant administration issues such as curriculum development, placement policies and procedures, faculty selection, and program evaluation. Administrators strongly support the program, pointing out that it helps build student confidence and encourages students to consider higher education opportunities. Faculty perception varies, with community college faculty expressing concerns about student preparation and philosophical issues related to combining senior English with freshman composition. Dual credit English faculty, on the other hand, generally expressed more positive views, noting many of the same benefits students had cited.

The final chapter summarizes program successes, identifies concerns, and makes recommendations for improvements in the dual credit English program.

To Daddy and Mother

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To the co-chairs of my dissertation committee, Dr. Patricia Kelly and Dr. John Capps, I am forever indebted. Both were mentors in the truest sense of the word, tirelessly giving of their time and energy. Dr. Kelly guided me through my graduate course work; she helped develop my program of studies, assisted with the planning and implementation of my research study, and gave countless hours of her time to help me complete this dissertation. Without her guidance and leadership, I could never have completed this project. Likewise, Dr. Capps has provided on-going support of my graduate work. From my initial meeting with him during the first semester of my doctoral work to the completion of this dissertation, Dr. Capps has become one of my most valued colleagues. His obvious love of teaching and his commitment to the highest educational standards make him a true role model. I especially appreciate the many hours he devoted to working with me, from his assistance with the overall research project to the countless hours he spent responding to rough drafts and helping edit the final document.

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CHAPTER 1

WYTHEVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S

DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH PROGRAM

Introduction

Since the adoption of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* in 1988, the Virginia Community College System has experienced a phenomenally positive response to dual enrollment or dual credit course offerings. Such dual enrollment/dual credit programs essentially allow high school students to enroll in community college courses while simultaneously completing high school graduation requirements through articulation agreements developed between local community colleges and the public school systems in their respective service regions. During the 1999-2000 academic year, dual enrollment/dual credit courses accounted for a total of 3,041 full-time equivalent students (FTES) or 3.8 percent of the system's overall FTES enrollment ("VCCS Student Summary 1999-2000" 1). At least some type of dual enrollment/dual credit course is being offered at each of the twenty-three community colleges that comprise the Virginia Community College System. At some of these institutions, dual enrollment courses generate as much as 10 to 17 percent of the college's total FTES enrollment. Dual credit accounted for 160 FTES, or 10.1 percent of total FTES at Wytheville Community College during the 1999-2000 academic year ("VCCS Student Summary 1999-2000" 1).

This popularity of dual enrollment programs is not unique to Virginia. A recent article in *Community College Journal* entitled "The Dual Credit Explosion" focused on the proliferation of dual credit offerings nationwide, reporting that as much as 4.9 percent of national community college enrollment may be attributed to dual credit offerings (Andrews 16). In many instances dual enrollment programs seem to be replacing well-entrenched Advanced Placement (AP) courses, primarily because of the guarantee of college credit upon successful course completion, without students being required to obtain certain scores on expensive AP tests.

As is true with any academic program, the explosion of dual enrollment courses has prompted the need for analysis of these offerings. Because courses are offered in a variety of disciplines, a study of the entire dual enrollment program was not practical, if indeed possible. Thus, as a full-time community college English faculty member at Wytheville Community College (one of those comprising the Virginia Community College System), I embarked on a study of the dual credit English program at my institution. It should be noted that most community colleges, both nationally and in Virginia, employ the term "dual enrollment," but some institutions, including Wytheville, opt to use the term "dual credit." The terms are synonymous, but because my study focuses on the English program at Wytheville Community College, I will use that college's terminology.

Before articulating details regarding the research study, I believe it is important to provide an institutional profile of Wytheville Community College, as well as profiles of the high schools in the college's service region that participate in the dual credit English program.

Profile of Wytheville Community College

The Virginia General Assembly authorized creation of Wytheville Community College in 1962. The college welcomed its first students in September 1963 and operated as a two-year branch of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University until 1966 when the Virginia General Assembly formally established the Virginia Community College System; Wytheville Community College joined the Virginia Community College System on July 1, 1967. The college serves Bland County, Carroll County, the City of Galax, Grayson County, Wythe County, and part of Smyth County (Marion and eastward). In the heart of Southwest Virginia, this area is predominantly rural, covering 1,962 square miles. Table 1.1 provides information on population and an economic profile of the college's service region (*Virginia Statistical Abstract* 2000 Edition).

Table 1.1: Population and Economic Profile

County	Population	Per Capita Income	Percent Below Poverty Level	Percent Below 150% Poverty Level
Bland	6,900	15,127	13.3%	22%
Carroll	28,200	*16,909	15.9%	*32%
Grayson	16,500	16,761	14.6%	30%
Smyth	32,700	17,164	16.5%	33%
Wythe	26,600	18,737	16.1%	26%
City of Galax	6,900	*16,909	19.4%	*32%
Service Region	117,800	16,940	16%	28.4%
Virginia	6,791,300	26,109	10.5%	22.8%
United States	270,299,000	21,696	12.8%	Not available
*Combined areas, City of Galax and Carroll County				

Almost 40 percent of the residents of the Ninth Congressional District (which encompasses the Wytheville Community College service region) who are over the age of twenty-five have not completed high school. Not surprisingly, many citizens enrolling at Wytheville Community College are first-generation college students. Perhaps because of the relatively low educational level of the general population, the dual credit program offered through Wytheville Community College and the participating high schools has been a significant component of increasing awareness of the importance of education and helping students recognize their own abilities to succeed in higher education.

During 1999-2000 Wytheville Community College had an enrollment of 1350 annualized FTES. Employing fifty-two full-time faculty and approximately 100 full-time staff, the college offers five associate in arts and sciences programs from which students transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and seventeen associate in applied science programs, one

diploma program, and nine certificate programs which are primarily occupational/technical in nature. Most courses are offered at the college's main campus in the town of Wytheville, with additional courses being offered at one of two education centers located in Atkins and Galax, Virginia, or at five regional sites throughout the service region. Wytheville Community College is approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and by the Virginia Community College System. Associate-degree curricula of the college have also been approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The college is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

With the adoption of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*, Wytheville Community College immediately developed its own institutional dual credit program and offered courses the first semester allowable under the new agreement. Among disciplines selected for inclusion was English. In the fall of 1988, three of the region's public school systems chose to offer dual credit English: Bland County, Carroll County, and Grayson County. In subsequent years, all except two of the eligible high schools in the service region chose to participate in the dual credit English program.

Profiles of Participating High Schools

Bland County School System

Bland County is located in the northeastern part of the service region. According to the "Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia 1997-98," the most recent enrollment data available, the Bland County school system's end-of-year Average Daily Membership for grades 8 through 12 was 379, and the county had thirty secondary teaching positions (3). There are two high schools in the county's public education system, Bland High School and Rocky Gap High School.

Only Rocky Gap High School participated in the dual credit English program during the first year it was available, but Bland High School joined the program in 1989. Dual credit English courses at Bland High School have an average enrollment of sixteen students. Even

though courses were offered each year at Rocky Gap High School, from 1991-1994 no students enrolled. From 1994 to the present, one section of the dual credit courses has been offered at Rocky Gap High School each year. Average course enrollment in dual credit English at Rocky Gap is ten. One English faculty member has taught all dual credit English courses at Bland High School, and another faculty member has taught all dual credit English courses at Rocky Gap High School.

Carroll County School System

Significantly larger than Bland County, Carroll County is located in the southeastern part of the service region. The public school system includes numerous elementary and middle schools but only one consolidated high school. Carroll County High School, located in the town of Hillsville, had an average end-of-year Average Daily Membership for grades 8 through 12 of 1,444 in 1997-98 and had 133 secondary teaching positions ("Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia 1997-98" 3). During the first year of the dual credit English program, Carroll County High School offered only one section of dual credit English, but interest in the program quickly mushroomed, with the county offering as many as three different sections most semesters thereafter. Average enrollment in dual credit English classes is sixteen students. One faculty member has taught most of the dual credit English courses offered at Carroll County High School, with a second faculty member having also taught one other section each year from 1991-1993.

Grayson County School System

Grayson County, located in the southwestern part of the college's service region, also has several elementary schools, though fewer than Carroll County, but only one middle school. The county has two high schools, the largest being Grayson County High School and the smaller one Mt. Rogers High School. Grayson County High School is located in the town of Independence, and Mt. Rogers High School is located at Mt. Rogers in the western-most part of the county. The Grayson County school system's end-of-year membership for grades 8 through 12 was 811, and the system had 77.46 secondary teaching positions ("Superintendent's

Annual Report for Virginia 1997-98" 3). Because Mt. Rogers High School is the smallest high school in Virginia (averaging only two or three graduates each year), dual credit courses are not offered there. Grayson County High School has offered dual credit English courses every year since 1989. Average enrollment in dual credit English courses is twenty-four students. One faculty member served as dual credit English faculty from 1988 to 1996. From 1997 to 2000, another faculty member taught dual credit English.

Galax City School System

Galax High School began participating during the fourth year of the dual credit English program. The City of Galax is located between Carroll County and Grayson County. Galax High School's end-of-year membership for grades 8 through 12 was 427, and the school system had 37.11 secondary teaching positions ("Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia 1997-98" 3). Average enrollment per section of dual credit courses is eighteen students. From 1990 to 1997, one faculty member taught dual credit English, with another faculty member teaching from 1997 to 2000.

Wythe County School System

It was not until 1996 that Wythe County began participating in the dual credit English program. Wythe County's end-of-year membership for grades 8 through 12 was 1,638, and the school system had 136.79 secondary teaching positions ("Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia 1997-98" 3). The Wythe County School System includes three high schools. The largest of these high schools is George Wythe High School, which is located in the town of Wytheville, near the center of the county. Fort Chiswell High School is located east of the town of Wytheville in the Max Meadows area of the county. The smallest of the high schools in Wythe County is Rural Retreat High School, located west of Wytheville in the town of Rural Retreat. Dual credit English courses were offered only at George Wythe High School and Fort Chiswell High School from 1996-1998. In 1998 Rural Retreat High School joined the program. There are two dual credit English faculty at George Wythe High School who share responsibility for teaching dual credit courses. During the first year of the program at Fort

Chiswell High School, one faculty member taught dual credit English. Following her retirement, another faculty member assumed responsibility for these courses. Prior to 1998, courses had not been offered at Rural Retreat High School because there had been no English department faculty holding a master's degree in English; students from Rural Retreat had been given the option of commuting to George Wythe High School to take dual credit English, but few chose to do so (see more detailed explanation in Chapter 5). In 1998 Rural Retreat High School hired a credentialed faculty member, and dual credit English courses were offered on site.

Research Focus

Because the dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College had gained increasing popularity during its first decade and had become an integral part of the English course offerings. I was particularly interested, as a full-time English faculty member, in learning about the history of the program and determining program effectiveness. Initial research questions centered on the following: how the dual credit English program had begun; how the program was perceived by involved constituencies, including administrators, faculty, and students; what the strengths and weaknesses of the program were; and what, if any, changes needed to be made to improve program quality.

With this basic framework, I began a predominantly qualitative program study which began in 1995 and continued through 2000. Over the course of that time period, I conducted in-depth interviews with five community college administrators, six high school administrators, two full-time community college English faculty, six dual credit English faculty (all of whom were full-time high school English faculty), and seventeen graduates of the dual credit English program. I also conducted two focus group sessions with students from two of the participating high schools, one of which had offered the dual credit English program since 1989 and one of which had begun participating in 1996. Additionally, I conducted a survey of ninety-seven students who were enrolled during the last year of my study (considered "currently enrolled" students). Finally, I tracked the grades of 445 students who had completed dual credit English and subsequently enrolled as "regular" college students at Wytheville Community College.

More detailed information regarding specific research methodology, as well as a literature review, appears throughout the research document.

Research Document Format

Research findings are presented in the following chapters of this document. Chapter 2 focuses on the history of the development of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 center on administrative, faculty, and student perspectives of the dual credit English program respectively. Throughout the text, recommendations are made as deemed appropriate from data collected, with the concluding chapter offering a summary of findings and recommendations for the Wytheville Community College dual credit English program.

Beginning in Chapter 2, I have changed the names of all of the participating high schools and assigned pseudonyms to all high school administrators, faculty, and students. While it would have been preferable to use actual names throughout the text, some individuals agreed to participate in the study only on condition of anonymity; therefore, it was necessary to change all references to try to mask individual identities. All community college administrators and individuals involved in the development of *the Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* spoke on record, so these names have not been changed.

CHAPTER 2

THE VIRGINIA PLAN FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT:

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Researching Dual Credit Program History

To begin the study, I sought to determine how the general dual credit program had come into existence. This proved to be a more arduous task than I had first anticipated. I easily obtained a copy of *the Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*, the document governing all dual credit programs throughout the Virginia Community College System; however, when I asked how that document came into being, no one at Wytheville Community College could provide a definitive answer. I contacted Dr. Arnold Oliver, chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, and asked if he remembered how the program was initiated. He indicated that he believed a special task force had been appointed to develop the dual credit program and suggested I contact Dr. Edward Barnes, president of New River Community College, who he thought had served on that task force.

I contacted Barnes, and he confirmed that he had served on the Task Force for Dual Enrollment. He indicated that Dr. Deborah DiCroce had served as chair of the task force, noting that, if memory served him correctly, the time frame would have been around 1987. He spoke with pride about the work of the task force, commenting that the implementation of the dual credit program was one of the things of which he was most proud. He told me he still had copies of the minutes of the task force meetings and several related documents and that I was welcome to borrow that information. I traveled to New River Community College to pick up the materials but was able to speak with Barnes only briefly. These documents proved to be invaluable, documenting all of the meetings that had led to the completion of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* and, perhaps equally important, providing me with names of others involved in the development of the program.

I followed up by interviewing DiCroce and Dr. Donald Finley, former Secretary of Education in Virginia and one of the official signers of the final document. I conducted the interviews with DiCroce and Finley by telephone, primarily because of time and geographical constraints. Another person who appeared to have played a major role on the task force was Dr. Jeff Hockaday, former Virginia Community College System chancellor. Because Hockaday had retired, I was unable to obtain a telephone number to be able to speak with him directly; however, I did send a letter to the most recent available address, and the letter did reach him. He responded promptly, answering the question I had presented in the letter.

I asked each of the interviewees to tell me what had prompted the Virginia Community College System to consider becoming involved in the dual credit program and whether or not the program had been modeled after programs in other states. I also asked them to talk about issues that arose during the planning process and why specific decisions were made, i.e. why the program was restricted to junior and senior high school students, why there were restrictions on certain course offerings, and so on. I also asked each to describe his or her memories of the work of the task force and then his or her perceptions of the success or failure of the program. Because I conducted the interviews by telephone, I was not able to tape the conversations, but I did take notes during the interviews and wrote field notes following the conversations.

Based on my review of the historical documents from the Task Force on Dual Enrollment and analysis of the interview data, I was able to reconstruct an outline of the evolution of the program and articulate how and why the program was designed as it was.

Rationales for Dual Credit Programs

A review of the literature on dual credit programs suggests that there were several factors that contributed to the development of such programs. In some cases, dual credit courses provided more challenging opportunities for high school students who had already completed most of their graduation requirements. These courses helped address problems with lack of student motivation and "senioritis," both of which appear to have been major factors

leading to the development of the Syracuse University Project Advance, "the premier program among those that provide college-level courses to pre-college students" (Daly iii).

Aside from addressing the issue of student boredom, accelerating student completion of college degrees was, in fact, a primary rationale in the initial development of Florida's dual credit plan, but as the program evolved, its focus shifted from shortening the time required for students to earn college degrees to providing "academic enrichment" (Bickel 14-15).

Yet another set of factors that were more political and economic in nature has also influenced the development of dual credit programs. In "The High School/Community College Connection: An ERIC Review," Theo Mabry states: "Declining community college enrollments, low test scores and high dropout rates in secondary schools, and a workforce that lacks the necessary skills for burgeoning high tech industries have all contributed to a growing recognition among community college leaders that they must not only actively recruit high school students, but also collaborate with high schools to prepare students to succeed in college" (48). In such instances, colleges were more active initiators in the movement toward dual credit than high schools.

However, in *High School-College Partnerships: Conceptual Models, Programs and Issues* Arthur Greenberg suggests that dual credit programs were developed as a means of addressing such issues as "increasing college tuition costs, public skepticism about the value of increased secondary school spending, debate over the purpose of college and the meaning of cultural literacy" (25). He also notes that publication of *A Nation at Risk* "heightened the public perception of a crisis in our schools" and prompted development of programs such as dual credit (25).

In Virginia the impetus for a dual credit program seems to have been an outgrowth of an increased emphasis on articulation between public schools and colleges during the 1980s. At that time public schools and colleges were developing and implementing 2 + 2 programs and Tech Prep programs. The 2 + 2 programs sought to establish coordinated curricula that allowed students to complete two years of a vocational program in high school and then the

subsequent two years of the program at the community college. The two institutions cooperatively worked out details to avoid unnecessary duplication of material. The Tech Prep Program was based on a similar premise with the additional rationale that many educational programs primarily catered to the most academically successful college-bound students. In addition, there was a need for a program for the statistically higher number of "average" students who might desire some education beyond high school but who were unlikely to pursue bachelor degrees. As these programs developed, administrators apparently began exploring the possibilities of offering some of the college-level courses to those high school students who were prepared and who had time available in their high school schedules to get a head start on their college degrees; thus dual credit emerged. Exactly what sparked this focus on articulation is unclear. Undoubtedly some of the aforementioned rationales for other programs played some role.

Dr. Jeff Hockaday, chancellor of the Virginia Community College System at the time Virginia's dual credit program was established, pointed out that Virginia Community College System presidents supported the development of a dual credit program. He suggested that their support was "sparked by the interest of parents/students," as well as by the "generation of FTES and recruitment of students." Dr. William F. Snyder, president of Wytheville Community College, confirmed Hockaday's contention, noting that the program provided additional educational opportunities for high school students and, at the same time, served as an effective recruitment tool for the college.

The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*

Dual credit programs have been offered in Virginia since 1988. At that time, Donald J. Finley, Secretary of Education; S. John Davis, Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Jeff Hockaday signed the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*, the document governing dual credit agreements between public schools and community colleges in Virginia (see Appendix A). The agreement itself resulted from the work of a Task Force on Dual Enrollment, which included representatives from both public instruction and the Virginia Community College System.

Program Purpose

Dr. Deborah DiCroce, president of Piedmont Virginia Community College, chaired the Task Force on Dual Enrollment. She noted that there was never any question as to whether or not the community college system would be the agency to participate in the agreement with the public schools, pointing out that the Virginia Community College System was in the best position to provide the classes because of its course offerings, as well as its colleges' geographic distribution designed to serve all regions of the state. In separate interviews, both Finley and DiCroce concurred that the primary philosophy behind the initiative to develop a dual credit program was the desire to provide a wider range of course offerings to students. Finley commented that such programs were particularly beneficial to rural school systems that often did not have the resources to offer a wide range of advanced courses, especially for their gifted students. The community colleges often had these types of courses already in place, so it seemed logical to make these courses available to qualified high school students. Not only did sharing resources make sense financially, but it also helped eliminate the unnecessary duplication of courses for students who had sometimes been required to take very similar courses in both their high school and college programs. These philosophies were in line with the rationale of programs being offered in other states (as noted above), although Finley, DiCroce, and Hockaday indicated that the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* was not directly modeled after any specific program. DiCroce noted that members of the Task Force on Dual Enrollment were aware of the existence of other programs. Barnes, one of the committee members representing the Virginia Community College System, had worked in higher education in North Carolina prior to moving to Virginia and was no doubt familiar with the North Carolina model. Finley had also served on the Southern Regional Education Board and was, therefore, familiar with other dual credit programs.

Course Eligibility

Beyond developing the purpose of the agreement, the Task Force on Dual Enrollment also established certain parameters for the types of courses that could be offered, stating that

these could include "academic, fine arts, and vocational subject areas" (*Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* 1). Initially, it was expected that vocational courses would be the most popular dual credit offerings, particularly with the 2 + 2 and Tech Prep programs already fairly well established in the mid-1980s. Over time, however, academic courses in the transfer area came to dominate dual credit offerings, accounting for 80 percent of all dual credit courses in 1997. All dual credit courses can be "part of a degree, certificate, or diploma program at the community college" but cannot include developmental courses or health and physical education courses.

Student Eligibility

Once course eligibility was established, there was the issue of student eligibility. Indicating that there was "considerable debate" over which students would be allowed to take dual credit courses, DiCroce said that this issue was one of the most difficult to settle because some people wanted courses to be available to any high school student who could meet the placement criteria, regardless of the student's age. Members of the Task Force on Dual Enrollment finally agreed that only qualified high school juniors and seniors who were sixteen years of age or older would be eligible to participate. DiCroce noted that the Task Force members recognized that even though some younger students might have mastered the prerequisite skills for certain courses, a higher level of maturity was necessary for most collegiate material.

Admissions Criteria

In terms of "qualified students, the agreement stipulated that the high school student be recommended by the public school and meet the admissions requirements established by the community college" (*Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* 2). Community colleges in Virginia do have "open door" admissions policies, but there are prerequisite requirements for enrollment in specific courses. Each of the twenty-three community colleges develops its own admissions requirements, although there are some system-wide guidelines. At Wytheville Community College, for example, faculty and administrators in each academic discipline determine

placement criteria. Math and biology have prerequisite courses required for admission to their respective dual credit classes. In English, department faculty work in cooperation with the college's Developmental Studies Committee to select an appropriate nationally normed placement test, and based on available data, determine appropriate placement scores. Scores determine if students are allowed to enroll in freshman-level composition courses or if they will be required to complete a developmental writing course prior to enrolling in freshman-level courses. Placement procedures do allow some students to complete a separate writing sample test; students scoring within a designated range on the placement test are allowed, though are not required, to write a sample essay that is then scored holistically by full-time English faculty. The score on the essay determines whether students will be allowed to place out of developmental writing courses. These placement procedures apply to all incoming community college students, not just dual credit English students.

Generally, the college sends counselors to each of the public school systems that offer dual credit courses. These counselors administer the required placements tests to prospective students. The public schools retain the right to determine which high school students may take such placement tests. In most cases, all students who wish to take the tests are allowed to do so; however, in at least one school system in Wytheville Community College's service region, administrators restrict placement testing and subsequent enrollment in dual credit courses to only those students with a "B" average or higher. Articulation agreements between the public schools and the community college define such placement policies. Overall, the intent of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* is that dual credit students not receive special consideration for admission but instead be held to the same admission standards as any other student seeking to enroll at the community college.

Faculty Selection

While both high school and community college accrediting agencies govern admissions requirements and credit awarded, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' (SACS) criteria for community colleges take precedence in terms of policy on faculty selection. All dual

credit faculty must meet the same requirements of all community college faculty; to teach dual credit English, faculty must have a master's degree with a minimum of eighteen semester credit hours in the teaching field. Adherence to this requirement is expected at each college, but not all colleges have complied. DiCroce emphasized that tougher SACS criteria and increased accountability required by the Virginia Community College System should help eliminate this problem.

Assessment

At the time the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* was signed in 1988, it did include a section on assessment. DiCroce commented that this section was deliberately vague, noting that at the time outcomes assessment was just being developed. In retrospect, she believes this was the weakest component of the dual credit arrangement. She said that community colleges have the responsibility to assess dual credit programs as rigorously as any other program they offer. She noted that lack of such assessment measures initially left the program open to criticism and questions about quality which, in turn, led to problems with transferability of dual credit courses to other institutions. She pointed out that recently SACS has added criteria specifically designed to assess the quality of dual credit programs. Also, the Virginia Community College System now requires that all its community colleges include reports on dual credit programs as part of their overall annual assessment reports. Increased efforts in assessing dual credit programs have most certainly contributed to the transferability of dual credit courses to all but one of the state-supported four-year institutions in Virginia.

State Funding and Tuition and Fees

Even more challenging than the issue of assessment has been the issue of tuition and fees. This issue has come under more scrutiny and attack than any other single component of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*.

Finley pointed out that from his perspective money was never a major factor in establishing the dual credit agreement. According to Finley, neither public schools nor

community colleges intended to make money, but rather to provide student access to expanded course offerings. DiCroce similarly noted that cost effectiveness of the program was not a primary concern at the time the agreement was established. She said the Task Force on Dual Enrollment was much more concerned with the student pursuit of lifelong learning than with money. At the same time, Hockaday stated that both Governor Gerald Baliles and Finley approved credit funding to both public schools (in terms of Average Daily Membership credits) and to community colleges (in terms of Full-Time Equivalent Student credits). Dr. Ned Swartz, who represented the Department of Education on the Task Force on Dual Enrollment and who is currently dean of instruction and student services at Lord Fairfax Community College, pointed out that such funding provided necessary incentives for participation in dual credit programs for both high schools and colleges.

Concerning payment of tuition and fees, the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* "encouraged" that courses be offered at no tuition cost to the student; however, this was not a requirement, and, in fact, in some individual agreements students do pay their own way. DiCroce said that members of the Task Force on Dual Enrollment decided unanimously that it would be in everyone's best interest to allow individual colleges to articulate their own agreements with the public schools in their service regions because those colleges were already aware of the dynamics of the public schools with which they would be dealing.

Presently DiCroce and the Virginia Community College System remain committed to leaving final decisions about tuition and fees to each college despite recent political pressure to standardize or create a statewide policy. This decision is clearly articulated in the "Report of the Committee on Dual Enrollment Fees" submitted to the Virginia General Assembly in October 1997. This report was in response to a joint resolution (HJR NO. 562) passed during the 1997 session of the Virginia General Assembly requesting that "the State Board for Community Colleges study the feasibility of establishing uniform fees for dual enrollment programs." The legislation resulted from complaints about student payment of tuition and fees. The committee collected data from across the United States and from the community colleges in the Virginia Community College System and found no consistency in how institutions handle tuition and fees

for dual enrollment. The "Report of the Committee on Dual Enrollment Fees" concluded that "[a]ny significant change to the current agreement might jeopardize (seriously in some cases) the schools'/school divisions' ability to participate [in dual credit programs]" (7). Therefore, no statewide policy was adopted.

Program Successes

The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* has succeeded in its purpose of increasing student access, with dual credit FTES accounting for 2.63 percent of total FTES in the Virginia Community College System and as much as 10 to 17 percent of total FTES at some individual colleges ("Report of the Committee on Dual Enrollment Fees" 24). The majority of people interviewed made reference to the time- and cost-saving aspects of the program for students and their parents.

Community colleges, and even other colleges and universities, benefit not only because dual credit course enrollments generate initial FTES, but also because dual credit often acts as an excellent recruitment tool when successful dual credit students who might not have otherwise considered pursing a college degree see that they are capable of doing college-level work.

Program Concerns

Beyond these benefits, the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* has also succeeded in improving communication and cooperation between public schools and community colleges. Reaping financial benefits from participation in dual credit programs serves as an incentive for such communication at both institutions.

Despite these positive effects of the program, critical analysis reveals concerns about the program. To begin with, one of the main criticisms leveled against the program by teachers—both high school and community college—is that the program was imposed by the state with no direct input from teaching faculty. At Wytheville Community College, faculty from all academic disciplines in which dual credit courses are offered stated that they initially voiced reservations

about the program, but their concerns were essentially ignored. Such reservations include philosophical concerns about combining (if not literally replacing) junior and senior courses with college-level courses. Faculty also questioned whether or not high school students would be mature enough to handle some college material. Perception among most faculty was (and often still is) that the financial benefits of the program overshadowed serious consideration of such concerns.

When the dual credit program was implemented, community college faculty were required to participate in various ways. In some disciplines, community college faculty often taught the dual credit courses, either on campus or at the high schools. Whether or not they taught the courses, community college faculty were responsible for developing appropriate course outlines, selecting textbooks, and sometimes spending time training dual credit teachers, who were most often high school teachers. One community college faculty noted that at least initially there was a significant time investment demanded of him with no additional compensation. Even after programs were established, some faculty were, and still are, required to assist dual credit faculty. This can be a burden on already overworked faculty who teach fifteen credit hours per semester, advise as many as fifty to one hundred students, serve on committees, sponsor student clubs and activities, and participate in professional development activities.

Like community college faculty, many high school faculty are forced to participate in the dual credit English program, sometimes involuntarily. In some cases, because of the accreditation criteria for faculty selection, it is not unusual (particularly in small rural schools) that only one faculty member per discipline is certified to teach dual credit courses. He or she is usually assigned to do so, regardless of willingness to teach the courses. In one case, a high school principal essentially mandated that a high school teacher obtain a master's degree to be able to teach dual credit classes even though the teacher had no desire to do that. Additionally, some high school administrators further impose policies on faculty through decisions about scheduling dual credit courses. In this situation a dual credit English teacher expressed concern about the high school's move to block scheduling and the principal's insistence that both dual

credit English courses (ENG 111 and 112) be taught in a single semester (see Appendix B and C for course outlines). The principal ignored the teacher's concern. When the teacher looked to the community college for support, the college responded by saying such a move was no different from the community college's offerings during summer school. However, both dual credit and community college faculty successfully argued that there was a difference, noting that students taking regular summer school courses had already completed high school courses, whereas dual credit students had not and might not be ready for such accelerated study.

Another concern about dual credit courses centers on the physical setting of such courses. Generally, only a small number of courses are offered on the community college campus. More often, dual credit courses are taught in the high school setting. DiCroce, along with community college faculty, pointed out that some four-year colleges and universities question whether the high school setting can provide an environment equivalent to that of a classroom on a college campus. Critics of the high school setting note that high school class time is often interrupted with announcements and other extra-curricular activities. Also, dual credit students do not have the same opportunities to interact with the wider range of peers that they might if they took the "regular" college courses on campus. This issue of setting and its effect on the comparable quality of dual credit courses has prompted questions about the transferability of dual credit course work to four-year institutions. Several private and out-of-state institutions do not accept dual credit courses at all.

Conclusions

Research of the history of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*, as well as a review of related literature on other dual credit programs and high school/college partnerships found that the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* is based on sound rationale. The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* clearly defines the program's purpose and outlines which community college courses are eligible to be taught as dual credit courses. The document also establishes which students may seek enrollment in dual credit courses and the admissions criteria they must

meet to enroll. Furthermore, the Plan determines faculty selection criteria, calls for regular program assessment, and sets parameters for state funding and tuition and fees.

The program does provide benefits to students, parents, high schools, and community colleges. Expanded curricular offerings enable students to begin accumulating college credits before high school graduation, often at no monetary cost to students or their parents. The program also encourages regular communication between high school and community college faculty and administrators while simultaneously generating state funds for both the high schools and community colleges.

Even though these benefits have no doubt bolstered the popularity of dual credit offerings, research indicates that there are several issues of concern that need to be addressed. Faculty—both high school and community college—should have more input in program decisions, and routine assessment measures must be in place to ensure that dual credit courses are of comparable quality to equivalent "regular" community college courses.

The following chapters focus more specifically on the dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College and seek to ascertain administrative, faculty, and student perspectives on program strengths and weaknesses.

CHAPTER 3

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH

Research Methodology

Having ascertained information about the history of the overall dual credit program, I then focused on the dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College in particular. Since the dual credit English program appeared to have been initiated by administrators and implemented from the administrative level, I needed to examine administrative perspectives of the program. I submitted a research proposal to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI & SU) Institutional Review Board, indicating my desire to interview community college and high school administrators and faculty involved with the dual credit English program. The proposal was approved, and I obtained written consent from each research participant. The interviews were based on a prepared set of open-ended interview questions. I designed questions to solicit information on administrative opinions about the program, including overall philosophical perspectives, as well as more practical administrative issues such as staffing, funding, and issues related to maintaining such an elaborate college-high school partnership. (See Appendix D and E for lists of interview questions.)

Wytheville Community College Administrators

I began by interviewing Dr. Dan Jones, chair of the Business, Humanities, and Social Science Division; his perspective was particularly important not only because he served as supervisor for and main discipline contact with dual credit English faculty but also because he had been a full-time English faculty member prior to serving as division chair. I also interviewed Dr. David Johnson, dual credit coordinator; Dr. Terrance Suarez, dean of instruction and student services; and Dr.William F. Snyder, president. I also interviewed Dr. John Capps, Humanities Division chair at Virginia Western Community College, to obtain another Virginia Community College System perspective regarding dual credit English. I then transcribed audio-tapes of the interviews and began coding the data for more careful analysis later. At this point,

coding primarily involved identifying key issues such as faculty selection, faculty and course evaluation, faculty professional development, faculty mentoring, curriculum development, and course transferability. Following each interview, I recorded field notes that were useful also in subsequent analysis.

High School Administrators

As Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson note *in Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*, qualitative research, by nature, is rarely linear, and this certainly proved to be the case with my project. Coffey and Atkinson write, "The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth" (6). As I interviewed community college administrators, multiple issues began to arise; these issues guided my subsequent research design. Initially, I had assumed I would deal primarily with community college administrators and faculty and then the dual credit English faculty at the participating high schools. I had not planned to include high school administrators; however, as I learned more about the complexity of the dual credit program, it became obvious that I needed the administrative perspective from the high schools to understand program dynamics more fully.

I was somewhat uncertain as to how receptive these administrators would be to my research, but I was pleased to find most of them very willing to talk to me. Time constraints did not allow me to interview administrators from all of the participating high schools, but I was able to interview one assistant superintendent, two principals, and three guidance counselors. Even though I was not able to interview an administrator or counselor at each school, the group I interviewed did include at least one administrator or counselor from a school system in each of the participating counties. Again, I conducted formal, in-depth interviews and was able to record and subsequently transcribe these tapes. Questions focused primarily on placement testing, faculty selection, financial agreements, and administrative perceptions of course strengths and weaknesses. Data collected from these interviews were valuable in providing insights as to how administrative attitudes affected course offerings, as well as overall program control. In this

respect, it was beneficial to have such information prior to interviews with at least some dual credit English faculty.

All administrators I interviewed believe the dual credit program is a very positive program. It should be noted that in most cases administrators responded to my questions from a perspective of all dual credit courses, not just those offered in English.

Research Findings

Program Strengths

Program Administration and Management

As previously noted, the overall dual credit program (not just the dual credit English component) exists through a partnership developed between Wytheville Community College and the public school systems in its service region. From a logistical standpoint, the administration of the program originates from the community college which assumes primary—though not exclusive—responsibility for the program. At the community college level, Dr. David Johnson serves as dual credit coordinator. He stated:

> I am responsible for many of the logistics of dual credit. We have meetings with all of our dual credit contacts in all of the public school divisions every fall, and I organize and put that all together. I bring in the appropriate administrators with the school division and the college, and then I work with the school divisions specifically in arranging their registration process and dealing with billing, and on occasion as necessary put them in touch with the proper people to, say, have testing done and those kinds of things. So I'm sort of a "point man."

Serving as dual credit coordinator is not Johnson's only position at the college. His primary title is director of continuing education, and, as such, his responsibilities include oversight of an

extensive continuing education program, as well as workforce development, the Small Business Development Center, and the Apprenticeship-Related Instruction Program. His office is also actively involved in several grant projects. As is apparent, in the scheme of his job description, coordinating the dual credit program is just one of many responsibilities. Thus, Johnson delegates much of the actual program management to the college's three academic division chairs, who then work with public school administrators. Johnson said: "The divisions take care of the real serious academic kinds of things such as teacher contracts, if there are those, and teacher credentials and problems and curriculum development and content and course outlines and that kind of thing."

While it is necessary and appropriate for each division chair to coordinate management of courses offered, this essentially means that public school administrators will be dealing with three separate community college administrators beyond Johnson, depending on what courses are being offered. Johnson pointed out that the division chairs are among those administrators invited to participate in annual dual credit planning meetings, but as a general rule not all three division chairs attend each meeting. Instead, the division chairs usually work out an arrangement in which each attends certain meetings as the designated representative for all three. Logistically, it is understandable that this is a more efficient means of scheduling these meetings. However, it also means that not all discipline-specific issues may be addressed during any given meeting. Of course, additional meetings may be scheduled, or high school administrators or faculty may simply work out the problem individually with the appropriate division chair. Johnson was quick to point out that the annual meeting is "the only scheduled meeting, but we will meet with the public school as many times as it takes to take care of situations." Interviews with high school administrators confirmed Johnson's contention, indicating that there is good, open communication between the high schools and the community college.

Because my study focused on the dual credit English program, in particular, research efforts centered on the English program specifically. I asked Dr. Dan Jones, chair of the Business, Humanities, and Social Science Division at the time most of the research was done, to describe his contact with high school administrators in terms of the dual credit English program.

He said, "I would say there's probably a contact in the beginning, at least by mail, sending materials, [course] outlines, and everything, and then beyond that probably at least a couple of other contacts during the semester by phone or by stopping by." Interviews with most dual credit faculty confirmed they were comfortable with the level of contact.

In terms of the dual credit English program, I asked Jones how involved community college faculty and dual credit faculty were in the overall decision-making process. He noted that full-time faculty develop the course outlines and all of the components of the course and that these are given to all adjunct faculty, including dual credit English faculty. He did indicate that he handled any negotiations with instructors and the principals or assistant principals.

Course Popularity

Overall, both community college and high school administrators enthusiastically support the dual credit English program, and all dual credit programs seem to have gained popularity in recent years. This increased popularity may be attributed to several factors. As already noted, the cost-saving and time-saving features of the program, as well as the transferability of courses to other institutions are clearly viewed as incentives for student participation. Also, Jones noted that the courses, at least in Wytheville Community College's service region, are favored over AP courses. Jones stated:

> The AP program is a long-term program that has some prestige in the schools and still exists throughout our service region and throughout Virginia. I think 90 percent of the high schools in Virginia have AP. IB is a new program—International Baccalaureate—and only about 15 high schools in Virginia have it. It is an even more prestigious program. The disadvantage of these two programs is that credit is not granted unless the student scores high on a post-test. The dual credit class is a little more appealing to a lot of students and a lot of teachers even though it doesn't have, to be honest, the prestige at this

> point of AP because the student can prove himself every day and can come out with at least a C at the end. Students have passed the course, and they have the credit. That credit can be moved to other places.

The post-tests Jones referred to are expensive, often costing $60 or $70, and each college or university is at liberty to set its own guidelines in terms of the scores it will accept. The fact that students who successfully complete the dual credit English courses are guaranteed college credit at most state-supported colleges and universities without having to take such a post-test has contributed greatly to the popularity of dual credit courses in Virginia.

Curriculum Enhancement

According to Dr. William F. Snyder, president of Wytheville Community College, the dual credit program was not the first high school/community college partnership to offer college-level courses to high schools. Snyder said:

> Actually we were doing some things like that earlier when we had enrichment programs for juniors and seniors in the summer, and then later we added enrichment programs for middle school. They were not getting the credit, but the programs were designed to assist high school students in having an enriched curriculum. Then in 1988 it [the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*] became formalized, and arrangements were made for students to get both high school and college credit.

Snyder noted that the dual credit program has been particularly popular in more rural areas, perhaps because of its ability to enhance curricular offerings:

> I think particularly in our area where the offerings are limited that this helps fill a void that's been present. If students can get

> almost all of their requirements for graduation by the end of the eleventh grade, dual credit gives them more options. They may have one or two classes to take—required classes to take—so for those who are interested in doing college-credit work, it really fills a need, I think, especially in our area where the offerings are limited.

Limited budgets of smaller rural school systems sometimes preclude the offering of advanced-level courses, and dual credit courses offered through the local community college often fill such voids.

Building Student Confidence

In addition to enhancing high school curricula, one of the key benefits of the dual credit program that all administrators pointed out was that the program helps students realize that they have the ability to do college-level work. Snyder said:

> I think it is a very positive program. One thing it does is help students to understand that they can do college work. Too often, especially in our area, I think students don't have any way of knowing how intelligent they are. A successful experience like this encourages them, I think, to go on to college. (1)

As noted before, this is particularly important considering almost 40 percent of the residents of the Ninth Congressional District (which encompasses Wytheville Community College) who are over the age of 25 have not completed high school. Many Wytheville Community College students are first-generation college students. Because students frequently come from homes where no one else has attended college, there is a tremendous need to convince students of the value of higher education, as well as students' capability of succeeding in college. Students' parents and families do not always understand the importance of college and may not encourage

their children to attend. Similarly, students may not believe that they are capable of doing college-level work, so the dual credit program gives them an opportunity to experience college-level work first hand in the already-familiar high school setting. Joe Turner, principal of Lincoln High School, also highlighted the dual credit program's ability to build student confidence: "We have some kids who are not quite sure of where they want to go on to challenge themselves—at a four-year school or a two-year school. I think dual credit gives them a little feeling of 'I can do it.' It's a confidence builder."

Time-Saving Feature of Dual Credit Courses

In noting how dual credit courses enhance curricular offerings and build student confidence, Snyder also alluded to another benefit of the dual credit program: students who take dual credit courses are often able to complete college requirements more quickly than students who wait until after graduation to begin college programs. Snyder reiterated that he believed this benefit is one of the most important features of the program. He said, "Dual credit allows people who are already capable of doing college work—who have that level of maturity—to get a head start and to enable them to reach the labor market earlier than might be the case otherwise." Johnson, Wytheville's dual credit coordinator, pointed out, "A student could start in his or her junior year, and if there are lots of opportunities for these students at their institutions, they could come out with at least a sophomore standing." Similarly, Jim Richards, director of instruction at Rockford High School, noted that a key advantage of the program is that "it gives students a chance, if they qualify for all courses, to virtually start college as a sophomore."

This time-saving feature seems to be particularly appealing to parents. Two of the high school administrators I interviewed indicated their own children had participated in the dual credit program and had benefited by being able to enter college with advanced standing. Matthew Sullivan, a guidance counselor at Rockford High School, said, "My son had thirty-four hours of dual credit when he left high school, so after two years in college, he's a rising senior." Turner also cited his daughter's experience of entering college as a sophomore as a benefit of

the dual credit program: "See my daughter graduated here with eighteen hours of dual credit or AP classes, and that's fantastic because you can graduate in three and a half years. And I think it's fantastic—most parents do. We've got kids that are graduating, you know, fifteen to eighteen hours in dual credit and that's helpful." No doubt their own children's satisfaction with the program made both administrators advocates in promoting the program to other students.

Cost-Saving Feature of Dual Credit Courses

Of course, closely tied to the perception that dual credit courses introduce students to college-level work and simultaneously provide the opportunity for advanced standing upon college entrance is the benefit that such courses are provided free of charge to students. All administrators, both high school and community college, pointed to the fact that the courses are provided at no cost to the students as being a major benefit of the program. This is a particularly important advantage, especially considering the overall economic situation of Southwest Virginia. Snyder observed: "Dual credit also saves students money and time. Our arrangement is such that the students don't have to pay the tuition, and so they can save a year's worth of tuition if they take advantage of all of the offered dual credit courses, a year's worth of tuition and in some cases a year's worth of time, of travel and other expenses." This is not true statewide because each community college in the Virginia Community College System is allowed to negotiate its own articulation agreements with the public school systems in its service region, and in some cases agreements at other institutions require students to pay their own tuition costs. However, the agreements between Wytheville Community College and the public school systems in its service region do provide dual credit courses at no tuition cost to students. The overall financial agreement essentially calls for the public school systems to pay the cost of each student's tuition to Wytheville Community College. In return, the college pays the school systems for the cost of instruction—the rate that would normally be paid to an adjunct faculty member, as well as a fee for the use of facilities since the courses are actually taught on public school property. According to Johnson:

> There is no extreme expense to a public school system for these college-level classes. The public school pays the tuition; we reimburse the public school for the cost of instruction. State policy will not allow us to reimburse exactly what's paid, but we have a formula that's developed that allows us to reimburse 97 percent of what is paid. Obviously the larger your program, the larger amount of money that is, but still it's only 3 percent that the college is keeping in terms of the tuition.

In many cases, the public school systems also purchase required textbooks for student use. Even if students are required to buy their own texts, this cost is generally minimal in comparison to tuition costs. Also, a sometimes overlooked cost saving is that of transportation; with dual credit courses being offered in the high school setting, the student does not incur the transportation costs associated with traveling to the college's main campus or even to regional site locations. The dual credit program may also help students learn about other financial aid programs that are available at the college and decide that a college education is within their economic reach, as well as within their intellectual capabilities. As Johnson noted, "Another benefit to the college is the fact that these students have a first college contact with Wytheville Community College, and the majority of those students in dual credit programs do continue their education at Wytheville Community College. So it gives them an entrée to the college that we might not otherwise have had if the program had not been in effect."

Issues of Course Comparability

Administrators acknowledge the value of the program to both students and the institutions involved. Part of the popularity of the program can no doubt be attributed to efforts to ensure that the dual credit courses are comparable to regular college courses. Snyder pointed out: "We use the same criteria for admission and pre-requisites, so we try to ensure the student gets the same course that they would get a year later or two years later when they were freshmen in college." This issue of the comparable quality of dual credit English courses to

regular college English courses is crucial not only for accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools but also for the transferability of courses to other colleges and universities. At the time of this study, dual credit English courses were being accepted at all other Virginia community colleges and at all state-supported four-year colleges and universities except the University of Virginia. A later section of this chapter focuses on this exception, and Chapter 5 provides a more detailed discussion of the transferability of dual credit English courses based on data obtained from program graduates.

The ease of transferability of dual credit courses to other institutions centers on the fact that the courses are considered of comparable quality to equivalent community college courses. One of the ways in which this is determined is through placement- testing criteria. Jones emphasized that the placement procedures are the same for dual credit as they are for all other Wytheville Community College students. He said: "For students who are candidates to enter the dual credit English courses, we administer the same placement test, the CWE [Conventions of Written English] test that we give our own—all the other students. They must make the same score as everyone else to qualify to get into the course. That is strictly enforced." Jones also pointed out that there are some public schools in the college's service region that add a further level of screening that students must pass before they are allowed to take the placement test: "At Rockford High School, for example, the student has to have at least a certain grade point average to qualify to take the placement test. It is up to the high school to set the policy of who they are going to be allowing to test for that." Such added screening criteria help ensure that students are ready to do college-level work and succeed.

Perhaps because the program seeks to ensure comparable quality between dual credit courses and regular community college courses, Johnson believes that the dual credit students who transfer to Wytheville Community College are "often times better prepared for the college experience because the dual credit program utilizes college books, college syllabi; everything is approved by the college and is, in fact, college-level work and college material that is being produced in the classroom."

Guaranteed Credit Contributes to Dual Credit Popularity

The dual credit program has provided a popular alternative to the Advanced Placement program that some schools had previously offered. Sullivan noted that Rockford High School prefers to offer dual credit courses:

> AP does not guarantee credit until the examination comes along. And this does guarantee credit if students make acceptable grades, we decided to go in that direction because our students don't always test the best in the world, so we knew with dual credit that they would get college credit in that situation.

Turner indicated that Lincoln High School had opted to combine the dual credit English courses with the AP English courses:

> There used to be a little competition between dual credit and advanced placement. Last few years we combined. You could take advanced placement, and if you could pass the dual credit class, you could take dual credit along with AP credit. And that's vice versa. If you're taking dual credit and you choose to take the AP exam, then make a three or above on it, then you can go to any university with that already completed English. Any student in school at any time can pay their $60 and take an AP exam, and if you pass that, you can go.

There is nothing in the dual credit agreement that precludes high schools from combining dual credit and AP courses as long as the established dual credit guidelines are followed.

Generation of Full-time Equivalent Students (FTES)

While administrators tended to highlight program benefits for students, they also acknowledged that the dual credit program is beneficial economically to both the community

college and the public schools. Johnson stated, "Dual credit obviously assists us in our budget by the fact that it generates full-time equivalent students (FTES) for the college. And that number is in the area of about I'd say 85 annualized, maybe not quite that. Anyway we do about 90 per semester, and we do two semesters—a fall semester and a spring semester, so I guess that would be somewhere in the neighborhood of 85 annualized because it varies some." As noted in Chapter 2, participating public schools also receive Average Daily Membership (ADM) credit for dual credit students, thus enhancing their budgets as well. The fact that both community colleges and public schools receive enrollment funding for dual credit students has drawn some criticism. However, as former Secretary of Education Finley noted, enrollment funding for both institutions is a key part of the incentive for participation. At the same time, some Virginia Community College System faculty caution that the dual credit program could be exploited as a means for boosting college enrollments, and these critics have challenged administrators to protect the integrity of the program. Because enrollment drives all college budgets, it is not unexpected that administrators are pleased that the program does generate significant enrollment.

Concerns

During interviews neither community college nor high school administrators identified major problems with the dual credit English program, but they did point out some areas of concern. The two main concerns involved placement testing and faculty selection.

Placement Testing

Even though Turner expressed an overall positive opinion about the dual credit program, he did note frustration with the placement policy for determining which students were allowed to enroll in dual credit English:

> Wytheville Community College has a criteria [sic] that we have to meet, and most of the kids, if they have difficulty, it is usually in writing because they don't have the experience in creative

> writing. We have had a few students that make pretty good grades and are over-achievers, hard workers, and a few slipped in, but they [Wytheville Community College] don't like to do that. .... There's a little conflict here. These kids, they're rejected because they didn't meet a certain score, but they can turn around next year and go right into the program at Wytheville Community College, and they don't reject them.

Turner's comment was particularly disturbing for several reasons. First of all, he admitted that he had "slipped in" some students who had not met the established placement criteria scores. He noted that the college did not like his doing that because of accreditation guidelines. Certainly the college is committed to meeting such accreditation guidelines, but even more importantly the placement guidelines are established to help students succeed, not just to allow the college to meet accrediting standards.

Turner's contention that students could go on the following year and not be "rejected" was also flawed because he did not take into consideration that perhaps students needed their senior year of high school English to prepare them to succeed in the ENG 111/ENG 112 courses. His comment that students did not do well on the placement test because they had not had creative writing was also incorrect because creative writing is not a prerequisite for either ENG 111 or 112. Turner suggested an alternative to the college's placement procedure, saying, "I'd like to see some teacher recommendations involved in it. Teachers know the students better than anybody." While it may be true that teacher recommendations would provide valuable data, such recommendations would be subjective. With faculty from five different school divisions making such recommendations, there would be no way to ensure consistency. The college requires a more standardized method of placement. To make such an exception for students wishing to take dual credit courses could compromise the integrity of the program in terms of its commitment to providing courses of comparable quality to other community college offerings.

Clearly administrative refusal to follow placement policy should not have occurred. However, as the study progressed, I determined that it was not necessarily surprising that such an oversight had occurred because management of the program is so widely distributed among both high school and community college administrators and faculty. Both Johnson and Jones assured me that they were aware of the problem and had taken action to see that such violations of the placement policy did not recur. In this instance Turner's expression of his own program concern brought to light a serious administrative issue that needed to be addressed. No other administrator voiced any concern about placement policy.

Faculty Selection

A second program concern centered on faculty selection. Richards said that perhaps the biggest disadvantage of the program "is getting qualified and certified personnel." Jones reiterated that this was sometimes a problem:

> To be honest I think we have a very limited pool of people to start with. Faculty have to have a master's degree, and they have to have eighteen hours in English. Step one is to find the teachers at the high school that have that credential, and in almost all cases, it's only been one person. There's one exception. I think that Pineville High School has two, and we've chosen at this point to use the one that had been teaching most for us anyway [as an adjunct in regular community college English courses].

As far as faculty selection at other participating high schools, the most serious problem had existed at Graceville High School where, until 1998, there had been no certified high school faculty member to teach the dual credit English courses. Graceville High School students wishing to take such courses had been given the option of traveling to nearby Pineville High School, another high school in that county's public school system. The close physical proximity of the two schools made this a viable alternative, but students tended to be reluctant to take

advantage of this alternative arrangement because of athletic and intra-county rivalry between the two schools. In 1998, following the retirement of a high school English teacher at Graceville High School, the county hired a replacement teacher who did hold a master's degree and was, therefore, eligible to teach the dual credit English courses on site at Graceville High School. Other high school administrators indicated similar plans to try to ensure that new hires in their respective English departments did have the credentials necessary to teach dual credit English courses. At the time of the study, there seemed to be sufficient numbers of certified faculty available to apply for these new positions in English, unlike the situation in other disciplines, where the pool of qualified applicants tended to be more limited. The only anticipated problems are in school systems where overall enrollments have decreased, and there may not be resources available for replacement of retiring faculty.

While high school administrators were aware of the problems with faculty selection and appeared to be taking measures to address these problems, there were still related issues concerning faculty selection. Finding qualified substitute teachers for dual credit English faculty proved to be a more complicated issue than that of simply finding general substitutes. At one of the participating high schools, the dual credit English faculty member was out on maternity leave for six weeks; finding a long-term substitute to fill her high school position was complicated by the fact that the substitute needed to have the credentials necessary to teach the dual credit English courses. Also, one of the dual credit English faculty members pointed out that having only one certified faculty member available to teach the courses at most of the participating high schools meant that students did not have the luxury of selecting teachers in the same way they probably would have had they been taking the ENG 111 and 112 courses on a college campus. At the same time, this raised the issue of whether or not a faculty member who was the only certified person at a high school really wanted to teach such dual credit courses. All of the dual credit English faculty I interviewed indicated they enjoyed teaching the courses, so it was not a problem; however, it is possible that this could become an issue.

During my interview with Jones, I asked if it would be possible for full-time community college English faculty to teach dual credit English courses when there was not a qualified high

school teacher available. Jones responded, "It would be possible, but the financial arrangements provide a strong disincentive to do that because the school division then would have to foot the tuition bill." If a community college faculty provided instruction instead of the high school faculty member, the college would not, of course, be reimbursing the public school for that part of the cost of instruction, thus resulting in the high school paying a larger portion of program cost than the community college. However, Dr. Terrance Suarez, dean of instruction and student services, noted that he believed most participating high schools would be willing to bear higher costs if no certified faculty were available in the high school setting. Suarez said he thought the high schools saw the dual credit program as being very valuable to students.

Besides placement procedures and faculty selection, a number of other administrative concerns involving the dual credit program emerged during the course of my research. These issues ranged from aspects of the program that caused minor inconveniences to much more serious problems, including a philosophical concern about the dual credit English program in particular.

Registration

One of the concerns regarding the entire dual credit program, not just the English component, involves registration, and it is really an issue of inconvenience. Currently eight different high schools from five different county or city school systems participate in the dual credit program. In each of these schools, there may be dual credit courses offered in numerous disciplines. Generally, students complete a separate form for each course they are taking rather than completing a single form that includes all courses taken. This may result from the fact that there are different types of placement guidelines in different disciplines, or it may result from the fact that dual credit faculty are not in a position to coordinate the process. Whatever the reason, the registration process is quite cumbersome, not only for students but also for dual credit faculty, high school administrators, and community college personnel. Personnel in the Records and Admission Office and the Business Office must process forms, often without the benefit of the students being on campus. For some reason there tend to be delays in forms

being delivered to campus in a timely fashion, causing problems for them in terms of tracking enrollment data. While community college counselors work directly with high school guidance counselors, this in and of itself is time consuming, and no matter how careful everyone is, the margin of error is undoubtedly higher than among counseling efforts involving students at only one institution.

Scheduling

Aside from the issue of registration, several aspects of dual credit English (and other disciplines) are not necessarily problems but are areas that need regular monitoring. One such issue is scheduling. Accreditation guidelines stipulate that contact hours must be the same for dual credit courses as for regular courses. This means that the community college must work closely with high school personnel to ensure that these guidelines are being met and students are receiving the same quality of instruction they would receive if they were enrolled in "regular" sections of these courses.

Total Number of Dual Credit Courses Taken

Another issue that one high school administrator identified was that of the total number of dual credit courses high school students should be allowed to take in a given semester. Sullivan, a Rockford High School guidance counselor, noted:

> Some students do load themselves up sometimes with maybe more [dual credit courses] than what they can handle, but we try to nip that in the bud to start with by setting limitations on what they can do. Before we went to the block system, we only allowed students to take no more than two dual credit courses in a year, and that was on a seven-period day. Now we try to limit them to two a semester if possible.

In this case, Sullivan's comment illustrated a commitment to help dual credit students succeed. However, during interviews with administrators at other high schools, I was less convinced that there was the same kind of commitment. The principal at one school, for instance, talked repeatedly about how proud he was of the large number of students taking advantage of the program and said that he would be in favor of all high school students taking as many dual credit courses as possible. This was the same principal who admitted ignoring results of placement criteria, thus suggesting that enrollment was more important than quality.

A separate interview with a principal from another high school indicated a different attitude that was equally disturbing. This principal, though enthusiastically supportive of the dual credit program, noted that one of the reasons for his enthusiasm was the fact that the courses were very difficult at the college, and he thought it was good that the students could take the classes in the high school setting where they would not be quite as difficult. This, of course, was most disturbing since the courses are supposed to be equivalent, regardless of whether they are taught to dual credit English students in the high school setting or whether they are taught to "regular" freshman students at Wytheville Community College. Such attitudes indicate that it is incumbent upon the college to monitor carefully all aspects of the dual credit program to make sure that the courses are providing quality educational opportunities for students.

Course Comparability

Documenting the comparable quality of dual credit courses to equivalent regular community college courses is crucial not only for maintaining accreditation but also for ensuring the transferability of dual credit courses to other colleges and universities. The first issue I explored was how the college seeks to assure course comparability. Division chairs are ultimately responsible for documenting such comparability. Students in dual credit courses must complete the same course requirements as students enrolled in regular sections of the equivalent community college courses. Division chairs provide course outlines and materials to dual credit faculty and are to explain expectations to these faculty. According to the dual credit English faculty I interviewed, most indicated the initial contact with the division chair was helpful.

However, I did identify several situations that indicated there had been breakdowns in communication regarding dual English credit courses. In one case, a faculty member mistakenly told students the dual credit English course was an AP English course (see Chapter 5: Graduate Perspectives), and in another situation a faculty member noted not having been given clear guidelines on course requirements other than during her initial contact with the division chair; as a result, she feared that changes had occurred without her knowledge. It was unclear as to why she had not sought clarification (see Chapter 4: Faculty Perspectives). Nonetheless, it did appear that dual credit faculty were aware that they were expected to follow the approved community college curricula.

Another mechanism intended to help ensure comparability is a faculty linkage program. Full-time community college English faculty are assigned to contact certain adjunct English faculty, including dual credit English faculty each year. Such a program, in theory, promotes communication, including the exchange of ideas and assistance with any program problems. However, my research indicated that, in reality, these contacts tend to be made sporadically and, in most cases, tend to be superficial. These contacts are usually brief telephone calls rather than face-to-face meetings. This is understandable considering the heavy workloads of both community college and dual credit faculty. Certainly face-to-face meetings would likely be more productive, but scheduling such meetings becomes complicated by both diverse teaching schedules and the distance between the college and most of the high schools in the college's service region (see Chapter 4: Faculty Perspectives).

When asked if he thought there should be any additional contact between full-time community college English faculty and dual credit English faculty, Jones replied, "I think that could only help. I think in the past we have had some of our faculty go on site and work with dual credit English faculty." Based on the interviews I conducted, it appeared that Jones was referring to one full-time faculty member's participation in a Title III grant the college had received. This grant allowed Nancy Boyer to have release time to work with adjunct English faculty, including dual credit English faculty. Boyer met with faculty and conducted classroom observations. She indicated that the contact was valuable, allowing her to get to know dual

credit English faculty. She had submitted a written report at the conclusion of the grant project, articulating both strengths and weaknesses she had identified in working with adjunct faculty but that she was never notified of how, if at all, the information was used (see Chapter 4: Faculty Perspectives). It should also be noted that this was a one-time grant-sponsored project, and such contact between full-time community college English faculty has not occurred since that grant, other than through the admittedly limited faculty linkage program.

Jones also noted that the college has part-time teacher workshops at the beginning of each semester. He said that, almost without fail, the dual credit English instructors come to those workshops. He observed, "They meet with their colleagues and with me, on a regular basis twice a year, for training." I asked if dual credit faculty were required to attend, and Jones clarified that they were "required to attend at least one workshop per year." While it is good that dual credit English faculty are required to attend at least one of these workshops, the workshops are not discipline-specific. Also, full-time faculty are invited to attend, but at the time of the research, I, as a full-time English faculty member, had never been told that I should attend, nor had I been told this was an opportunity to meet with the dual credit English faculty.

Johnson noted that he fully supported the idea of discipline-specific meetings of faculty from the two institutions, indicating one school system in particular had requested that full-time faculty sit in on dual credit classes and give constructive criticism. Indeed, it was encouraging to learn that one of the school systems had extended such an invitation. At the same time, Johnson, Snyder, and Jones warned that they did not want the community college to dictate too much policy requiring mandatory meetings among faculty. Johnson pointed out, "Dual credit instructors are teaching according to our curricula and expectations. Then to continue to pile on policy kinds of things, I think that's going to be a disincentive to start new programs and a disadvantage to continuation of some programs. So I don't want to become so legalistic that folks don't feel like they can function." Similarly, Snyder stated: "I think anything we can do to improve the instructional program, we should do. Of course, we're always careful about infringing on people's time. So we always try to be respectful of their [teachers'] time. If meetings were voluntary, I certainly would be in favor." In both cases, these community college

administrators emphasized their commitment to the partnership arrangement but did not want the community college to become too controlling.

Based on my research, it appeared that even though the faculty linkage program and the two professional development workshops were beneficial, they were not adequate methods for ensuring that dual credit English faculty were following prescribed course outlines. Instead, the division chair's contact with faculty and the college's evaluation and assessment processes were the primary mechanisms for monitoring dual credit course comparability and dual credit English faculty compliance with established course guidelines and requirements. Jones stated:

> The assessment of dual credit is the same assessment that we use for all our classes taught by part-time teachers. At least one thing that we do is student evaluation of faculty. That is done routinely for the dual credit classes just as it is the evening classes or day classes that are taught by other part-time teachers. We get that data to review every semester that the course is taught, and the students fill out a series of questions. It is really an assessment of the instructor's performance essentially, although students are allowed to write about textbook materials and that kind of thing as well. I review that and will comment on it and send these reports at the end of the semester back to the teachers. They have my reaction to it, as well as the students'.

Initially, this seemed to be a valid method of evaluation of the dual credit English program. However, as my research continued, I needed information from the student evaluations of faculty to verify information I obtained through interviews with dual credit graduates. I requested and received permission from the college to have access to these evaluations, though without specific teacher identification information because of confidentiality issues. In most cases, data from the student evaluations confirmed findings from the qualitative

interviews I had conducted with graduates and the survey data I obtained from currently enrolled students: they were generally positive. I was, however, able to determine by the number of evaluations received and the number of sections taught each semester that not every faculty member had submitted these student evaluation forms. At this point, a new division chair had been named for the Business, Humanities, and Social Science Division, and she was not aware of the issue. She and the division secretary investigated and determined that at least one dual credit English faculty who had been teaching since the program's inception had never submitted any student evaluations. They also found that one dual credit faculty member, who had taught for at least nine years in the dual credit English program, had apparently submitted only one set of student evaluations for one section of the courses she had taught.

In addition to the use of faculty evaluations, Jones did note that on one occasion a special assessment project was done that involved random review of term papers from all sections of ENG 112. Data from that project indicated that dual credit English students scored at least as well as students enrolled in regular sections of ENG 112, if not better. This type of assessment data was especially valuable in documenting course comparability; unfortunately, this was a one-time project. During a later interview with Dr. John Capps, Humanities Division chair at Virginia Western Community College, Capps noted that Virginia Western Community College's assessment plan includes regular portfolio reviews of all ENG 111 and ENG 112 courses, both regular and dual credit. Faculty are required to submit all student portfolios, and the English program head reviews a random sample of these portfolios to determine how students are performing and if faculty are following established course curricula. The program head routinely conducts annual evaluations with all dual credit faculty. Capps indicated that if any problems are identified, the program head meets with the faculty member to see that problems are corrected immediately. This type of routine evaluation of dual credit faculty provides needed program assessment data.

Wytheville Community College does conduct an annual survey of dual credit students, and I asked Jones to comment on that survey. Jones indicated that the surveys "provide even more data that are more comprehensive than just the [information about] the instructor. It has

to do with the whole program and the impact it is having on their lives and how they feel about the quality of the program. Johnson, as well as I and the other division chairs review that data and can make adjustments based on it." I obtained copies of the survey data and found that the survey consisted of questions that were more specifically focused on program issues than on instructor issues. The surveys were sent to all students enrolled in any dual credit course, not just dual credit English courses. In this respect, the data were more meaningful for overall dual credit program assessment than for assessment in specific disciplines, though the few written responses sometimes identified issues related to dual credit English.

I also asked Jones if, as division chair, he did classroom observations of dual credit English courses. He said:

> I have done that. I do not do it routinely. I supervise approximately fifty adjunct faculty, and I do not have time to get around to everybody, so that is not a part of our routine. I do go and observe if there is something unusual in the works—if there has been any kind of complaint. I have gone out and observed dual credit classes at most of the sites that we have over the years, but not every semester and not routinely. That is something that would be a good addition.

As Jones pointed out, dual credit English is only one of a myriad of responsibilities he has as division chair, as is the case with Johnson and his role as dual credit coordinator. In Jones' case, as division chair, he supervised some twenty full-time faculty members in addition to the fifty adjuncts he mentioned. These faculty taught in nine different disciplines, some occupational-technical and some transfer. Undoubtedly, it would be impossible for a division chair to focus all of his or her energy on dual credit English, but realistically, considering the large number of FTES dual credit courses generate and considering the special needs in terms of documenting comparable quality for course transferability, a relatively high level of supervision of dual credit courses is necessary and advantageous.

Course Transferability

As noted earlier, documenting course comparability is crucial to the transferability of dual credit courses to other two- and four-year colleges and universities. At the time of the study, all state-supported universities except the University of Virginia were accepting dual credit English courses from students transferring to their institutions. Jones had served for two years on the Transfer Committee of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and indicated:

> There is some suspicion of the quality and integrity of dual credit on the part of some four-year school faculty. The University of Virginia does not consider the ENG 111 taken in the dual credit setting to be the equivalent of their writing course. They require the student to take their writing course when they get there [UVA] even if they have had the dual credit class and have a grade. They will accept the credit as elective credit, but they will not count it for their writing requirement. It is a faculty decision at the university, and there is nothing that we can do about it at this point.

Jones noted that UVA will accept regular community college English as equivalent courses, but will not accept dual credit English for anything other than elective credit. When asked why he believed UVA took this stance on dual credit English, Jones said:

> It's a result of a kind of suspicion of where it's taught. They just think that there is no way you can get a college course in a high school building with bells ringing, intercoms, you know, and all this. My position is that is not the issue. There may be other problems, but that is not the issue because there's even more hours of instruction involved than here and that sort of

> compensates for anything lost through pep rallies and that kind of thing.

To try to address these concerns, Jones noted that the Transfer Committee had established a set of guidelines to assure that faculty teaching dual credit courses have a master's degree with eighteen English credits that would meet the standards of the accreditation agency. Also, it was agreed that colleges would follow the same placement procedures that they use for the whole college. Jones also noted that the colleges were responsible for providing assessment results documenting that the dual credit students were performing at the level of the regular college students.

Philosophy

Despite his support of the dual credit English program, Jones did articulate a philosophical concern:

> I have a philosophical problem with part of it. Biology is biology, for example, and someone can master that at age sixteen or seventeen as easily as they can at age eighteen. If they are good students, they have the ability to do it. There is a philosophical problem with the composition. And I've expressed this from the very beginning. There is a worry that students are being short-changed by skipping a year of instruction in writing. Writing is a long-term developmental kind of process, and someone who is taking the senior English and the college English simultaneously, and they do not take the writing class when they get to the college or university. That is essentially a year of opportunity for growth that is not there.

This was also my main concern about the program and one that many other community college English faculty and some dual credit English faculty had also expressed. Because I had begun

the research project with this admitted bias, I consciously tried to avoid imposing my position on research participants, though I may not have always succeeded. Nonetheless, I did not find that the philosophical concern was a major issue among other administrators.

Conclusions

High school and community college administrators indicated overall satisfaction with the dual credit English program. Both recognized the increasing popularity of dual credit offerings, citing numerous program benefits that likely contribute to this program's success. Dual credit courses enhance curricular offerings while simultaneously saving students money and time; at Wytheville Community College students bear no tuition costs for dual credit courses and are able to accumulate college credits that may accelerate their completion of college degrees. Administrators also believe that dual credit courses help build student confidence. The guaranteed college credit for students who successfully complete dual credit courses generally makes dual credit courses more popular than Advanced Placement offerings. In addition to these student benefits, administrators also acknowledge that dual credit programs benefit high schools and community colleges in terms of enrollment funding, with high schools receiving ADM credit and community colleges earning FTES credit.

Beyond such program benefits, administrators did identify areas of concern. High school administrators, in particular, raised some questions about placement testing. Both high school and community college administrators recognized faculty selection as being their biggest challenge, noting that it was sometimes difficult to find credentialed high school faculty to teach dual credit courses in the high school setting. The high school setting also factored into another concern regarding registration; dual credit courses are most frequently taught in the high school, and, as a result, course registration is not always completed in a timely fashion. Differences in scheduling also complicate dual credit offerings, particularly with block scheduling that many school systems have adopted. Beyond these concerns, administrators also expressed concern that the total number of dual credit courses students were allowed to take during a single semester needed to be monitored carefully. Issues of transferability of dual credit courses to

other colleges and university were also discussed, along with some philosophical concerns related to combining senior English with freshman composition.

The willingness of administrators to talk candidly about program strengths and weaknesses was encouraging. Both high school and community college administrators seemed committed to continuing cooperative efforts to ensure program quality.

CHAPTER 4

FACULTY PERSPECTIVES OF DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH

Research Methodology

Beyond needing to obtain administrative perspectives on dual credit English, I wanted to determine how both full-time community college English faculty and dual credit English faculty perceived the program. I employed the same methodology I had used with administrators. Issues discussed included faculty perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses, student preparation, student success, curricula, and program administration and management.

Community College English Faculty

I conducted interviews with the two other full-time English department faculty at Wytheville Community College who most frequently taught regular sections of ENG 111: College Composition I and ENG 112: College Composition II. At this point I should note that because of my teaching position within the Wytheville Community College English department, discussions with colleagues regarding dual credit English and my research had been on-going since the inception of my project. However, I did conduct formal interviews with these two fellow English department faculty who consented to participate in the research project. Interviews focused on their experiences with the program and their perceptions of the program. (See Appendix F for a list of interview questions.) It should be noted that the division chair had taught English at Wytheville Community College for almost twenty years prior to assuming his administrative position, so some of the information he provided on faculty issues may be referenced in this section. While this may seem to be a small sample, these were the only full-time community college faculty who were available to provide information. The English department itself is small, with only four full-time faculty positions, one of which is designated primarily to reading course instruction. At the time I began the research, Boyer, Brian Duncan, and I were the full-time faculty who most frequently taught ENG 111 and 112. I have deliberately focused more attention on Boyer's perspective because she has taught at the

college for over thirty years and, therefore, has greater knowledge of the history of both the English department and the dual credit English program. Duncan was a relatively new member of the department. By the same token, I have deliberately tried to limit expressing my opinions here—particularly in this chapter on faculty perspectives—as much as possible in an attempt to avoid researcher bias (though I recognize that researcher bias is inherent in qualitative studies). Also, the research would have obviously been enhanced had I been able to contact former full-time faculty members, but this was not possible. One faculty member who had been teaching when the dual credit English program was implemented had retired and subsequently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's; another faculty member had passed away. Therefore, the full-time faculty perspectives are admittedly somewhat limited.

During the interviews I was able to conduct, I asked faculty to articulate their perspectives formally during the interviews even though I had some knowledge of their views based on my own experiences within the department. Because Boyer had taught in the English department for over thirty years, she was able to provide additional historical data on the initial implementation of the dual credit English program and the program's evolution. These interviews were particularly helpful in identifying discipline-specific program issues that had not been raised during interviews with administrators. Information gleaned from these interviews helped shape interview questions for subsequent interviews with dual credit English faculty.

Dual Credit English Faculty

Equally important to the community college faculty perspective on dual credit English were the perspectives of the faculty who actually taught the courses. To obtain this information I also interviewed dual credit English faculty. Because the college's service region encompasses a five-county area in rural Southwest Virginia, the physical distance from public schools to the college generally prohibits high school students from attending dual credit English classes on the college's main campus; likewise, it also generally prohibits full-time English faculty from traveling to the high schools to teach the courses. Therefore, in all cases at Wytheville Community

College, dual credit English classes are taught in the high school setting by qualified high school faculty who are considered adjunct community college faculty.

I began by conducting in-depth interviews with some of the dual credit English faculty who had been involved longest with the program. In several instances faculty had been teaching the dual credit English courses since the program's inception. Because each high school generally has only one qualified faculty member to teach dual credit English courses, there has tended to be little change in the faculty who teach dual credit English courses. From a research perspective, being able to talk to these faculty provided valuable historical perspectives. While the majority of faculty had been involved with the program for at least several years, there were some newer faculty whom I was also able to interview.

I designed a common set of interview questions but adapted the list of questions based on data obtained throughout the interview sessions (see Appendix G for a list of interview questions). In most cases I went to the high schools to conduct the interviews. This proved valuable because I was able to observe classroom settings and, in some situations, faculty interactions with students. I gained permission to audio-tape formal interviews with all except one dual credit English faculty and also recorded field notes. I later transcribed the tapes and coded the transcripts.

During the interviews with faculty, I became keenly aware of the effect that I, as the researcher, was having on the research itself. Miles and Huberman write, "'Outsiders' to a group influence 'insiders,' and vice versa. So it is with the researcher who disembarks in a field setting to study the natives" (265). In most cases I conducted interviews with dual credit English faculty at the high schools where they taught. I had asked interviewees to participate in my research project, so it did not seem appropriate to ask them to travel to the college campus. For the faculty whom I already knew, I don't think this was a problem, but for faculty with whom I was less familiar, my physical presence may have been intimidating. In one case, a faculty member signed the consent form, agreeing to be interviewed, but refused to allow me to audio-tape the session; she said she had some concerns about the program and did not want

those officially recorded for fear of retribution. I had talked with this faculty member only by telephone prior to the interview, and she obviously did not think she could trust me with sensitive information. Another faculty member, whom I later learned had experienced major problems with parents of dual credit English students that semester, did consent to an interview but also appeared particularly nervous during our interview. Miles and Huberman point out that "informants will often craft their responses to be amenable to the researcher and to protect their self-interests" (265). I recognized that my position as a full-time community college faculty member might be perceived as a threat to some faculty and tried to make sure that, as Miles and Huberman recommend, faculty understood the nature of my research and what I planned to do with the information I obtained from them (265). Field notes recorded instances in which I thought faculty responses were crafted to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear or that indicated faculty were protecting their own self-interests. Whenever possible, I sought out information from other sources to confirm or dispel questionable data.

Research Findings

Community College English Faculty Perspectives

Initial Program Implementation

Overall, faculty perception of the dual credit English program is mixed albeit with a generally negative perspective from full-time community college English faculty. While faculty do admit that there are instances in which dual credit English graduates perform well in subsequent English courses, they point out that these are the exceptions rather than the rule. Part of this negative perception about the program undoubtedly can be traced to the initial implementation of the program. Both community college English faculty who were teaching at the time of implementation reported that they were never consulted regarding the program; rather, they were simply told the program would be implemented. One of these faculty commented:

> When [Wytheville Community College] first began with this dual credit, faculty had no input whatsoever. We received a memo from the dean stating that they [administrators] had made agreements with the high schools and this would be happening. They would like for us to meet the part-time people or the dual credit people who would be teaching the classes, and they gave us a time. We complained and really thought we should not do it. We did not think that this was a good way to go, and we complained and fussed and ranted and raved.

Philosophical Concern

The primary opposition to the dual credit English program from full-time faculty focused, and continues to focus, on a philosophical concern about the program. Generally full-time English faculty at Wytheville Community College, including me, worry that students participating in the program do not get the best possible background in English. The combination of students' senior year of English and their freshman year of college composition means that students do all of the work in a single year and do not have the advantage of two years of development. As most composition teachers know, proficiency in writing generally develops over time, and the dual credit English program, in this sense, deprives students of a year of development. Boyer notes: "I think we are asking the students to do too much in too short a time. Basically they are getting credit for two English classes in a single year." Boyer is not the only person who has expressed concern. Historical documents, including memos regarding dual credit English, confirm that other full-time English faculty have voiced concerns as well.

Administrative Motivation

Perhaps because of administrative disregard for faculty opinions, faculty have also questioned the motivation behind the program. Not unexpectedly faculty wonder if the program is seen as an easy way to increase enrollment and thus college funding. Based on discussions among faculty at system-wide professional development peer group meetings, I found that this is a contention that faculty across the Virginia Community College System seem to share.

Student Preparation

Disgruntlement over disregard for faculty input, coupled with suspicions regarding motivation for program implementation, have kept faculty concern high. As the program has progressed, faculty continue to cite examples of students who have enrolled in subsequent college-level English courses at Wytheville Community College who generally have not been well prepared. During her interview, Boyer indicated that she could often tell which students had completed dual credit English instead of regular sections of ENG 111 and 112 because of the quality of students' writing. She noted that many of these students were not well prepared to analyze literature and could not adequately outline or develop essays. Coupled with these problems, she pointed out that the writing of many students was flawed with grammatical and mechanical errors. Boyer said:

> [I]n the last few years I have had students that just do not do well on my tests because I give essay tests, and they just can't do it. I ask, "How did you do in ENG 111 and 112?" and I'm finding probably seven out of ten say, "I didn't really have 111 and 112 as such; I did it in dual credit courses." And so they just don't get to write. They literally do not write. They have no concept of development.

Although her reports are admittedly anecdotal, undoubtedly Boyer's first-hand experience in dealing with unprepared or under-prepared students shaped her overall negative perception of the program. She did acknowledge that some students do come into literature classes prepared, but as a whole she has found that dual credit English graduates are not well prepared. She continued:

> Now I'm not saying that all of my students that do the 111 and 112 do well in my American lit class. Heaven knows they do not. Even some of my own students don't do as well as I would hope, but it is really bad when you have a student who

> has no concept of what you mean when you say, "You didn't develop this." Or you'll tell students, "Discuss" and then in parentheses you'll put "no summary please" and then they summarize the work for you and have no concept it's a summary. And I'll say, "But I told you not to do that," and they say, "But what does that mean?" And they have no idea. They don't know terminology. They do not know how to organize. They do not know how to develop. And in most cases they just don't have a writing background.

These specific examples of problems with student performance indicate that the students Boyer encountered were not achieving basic objectives of ENG 111 and 112 through their dual credit English courses. However, Boyer's statement was generalized, and data were not available as to exactly which particular dual credit English program these students had completed. Boyer went on to explain in more detail why she questioned the validity of the whole program:

> When I pin [students] down and say how much writing did you do, they'll say, "Oh, one or two papers." And I'll say, "That was in addition to the senior writing?" and they say, "What do you mean?" And I say, "Well you had to do so many papers for senior English to graduate and then so many papers for College English to get credit." And they say, "Oh, no, no, no, no, they are not separate. We did two or three papers for all of it." It is no wonder they can't write. We're doing them a disservice.

If, in fact, students were writing only two or three papers (and interviews with graduates confirmed this—see Chapter 5), Boyer is correct in her opinion that the course is doing some students "a disservice" because students were not achieving course objectives. They were not likely being exposed to different types of writing experiences, nor were they benefiting from the

practice of completing multiple assignments. I had no experiences in teaching dual credit English graduates because my teaching load generally included only developmental writing courses (ENG 01) and regular ENG 111 and ENG 112 courses. As a result, I had no first-hand knowledge of dual credit English graduate preparedness.

To determine if other faculty perceptions of dual credit graduates paralleled Boyer's, I scheduled an interview with Brian Duncan, who taught full-time in the Wytheville Community College English department from 1992 to 1998 and who usually taught most of the British literature courses (ENG 243 and ENG 244). When I asked Duncan about the level of preparedness of dual credit graduates, I was surprised to learn that, even after teaching several years in the department, he knew relatively little about the dual credit English program. He reported that he had often had students he felt were unprepared for his literature courses, particularly for the writing assignments involved. He also noted that he had sometimes checked student records to determine what grade these students had received in prerequisite ENG 111 and ENG 112 courses and was often surprised to see that these students had frequently received grades of A or B. However, he could not say whether these unprepared students were dual credit graduates or not. He said in reviewing grade reports, he had noticed only that the instructors' names were not full-time department members and had therefore assumed that the courses were simply being taught by adjunct faculty. Basing his judgements on this assumption, he had never considered that the students might have completed ENG 111 and ENG 112 while they were still high school students.

Duncan's lack of understanding of the program was not atypical of that of faculty hired after implementation of the dual credit English program. I joined the department as a full-time faculty member in 1990, two years after the program began, and it was not until I was assigned to serve as a contact/mentor to several dual credit English faculty that I learned about the program. It was only because I had grown up in the college's service region and knew that the teachers I was assigned to work with were full-time high school teachers that I had any preliminary indication these faculty were different from other adjunct English faculty members. By the time Duncan arrived at Wytheville Community College, Boyer and I were already

serving as contacts/mentors to dual credit English faculty, so Duncan was assigned to work with other non-dual credit adjunct faculty. The issue of faculty contact/mentoring will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Instructional Concerns

Besides concern regarding dual credit graduate preparedness, Boyer also found reason to question the quality of the program based on her own interactions with some dual credit faculty. During the early years of the program, Boyer was asked to be a part of a Title III grant the college received; as part of that grant, she was given some release time to work with and observe adjunct faculty, including dual credit English faculty. During that project, she conducted several classroom observations of dual credit English faculty. She said:

> I met with each one of them for a conference and then I observed two classes each semester [for one year]. ...I always told the people that I would be there and set up a date that was convenient with them because I know when I was teaching in high school how I hated for my supervisor or someone just to pop in unannounced. This was the thing that really bothered me. Even though [dual credit English faculty] knew I was coming--they had picked out the day and had scheduled it--many times we had group work, or the activity would involve me to help with it, or the faculty did things that really didn't give me much insight into what was taking place in the classroom, what learning was taking place, and this always bothered me. ...I would like to have been able to spend a week, and to see how they work with students and to see what the objectives were because anybody can tell you anything, but it's when it's in the classroom, one-on-one that you really see what's happening.

As Boyer noted, one would have expected dual credit faculty to have taken steps to ensure that they were adequately prepared for her visits to their classrooms. However, this did not prove to be the case, at least in Boyer's judgment. Boyer said in one instance she went to one of the high schools and was shown to the appropriate room. The teacher had not yet arrived. As students began coming into the room, Boyer noticed that they were taking out copies of *Cliff's Notes* for the Shakespeare play they were supposed to be reading. Initially she assumed students were using these notes without their teacher's knowledge. However, much to Boyer's horror, the teacher came into the room and took out his own set of *Cliff's Notes* and started teaching from them. Boyer reported this incident to the division chair, but she said she was never told if any follow-up action was taken. The faculty member continued teaching.

Also while Boyer was serving as liaison with dual credit faculty, she had another experience that caused concern. During a conference with a faculty member, she learned that the only difference between senior English (which this faculty member also taught) and dual credit English was that the students in dual credit English were required "to read an extra book." When Boyer questioned the teacher further, she learned that each student had only to read the book, not do any written report or assignment to ensure that he or she actually had read the book or had any understanding of its content. Based on her interactions with dual credit faculty, Boyer said, "No two [dual credit English faculty] seem to have the same concept. We gave the dual credit teachers a manual, but I think over a period of time, you know, it just kind of disappeared. Plus I don't think anybody interpreted it the same way. ...So we really didn't have any two people doing the same thing; there was no consistency."

This contention that there was inconsistency among dual credit English courses was verified during one of my interviews with another dual credit English faculty. The dual credit faculty member made reference to the "three essays" in ENG 111. Upon further questioning, I determined that she was in fact requiring students to write only three essays even though the course outline prescribed a minimum of seven essays. When asked about this, the dual credit faculty member said, "I haven't seen anyone else's course outline since the first one I received." Apparently the course outline this teacher received the first semester was not explained as being

the model for all courses, so she apparently had determined it was appropriate to do whatever she thought best. According to the college's guidelines, full-time community college English faculty are to develop a course outline that all faculty teaching that course are to follow—whether they be full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, or dual credit faculty. These outlines are intended to provide course objectives and minimal requirements while simultaneously allowing individual faculty adequate control over pedagogical methodologies and specific assignments. Unfortunately, this was not effectively communicated to the dual credit faculty, either initially or through subsequent communication. Incidences such as these have caused community college English faculty to be somewhat skeptical about the quality of the program.

As part of the expectation that all faculty follow a common, approved course outline, all faculty are also expected to use the course text(s) selected by the full-time English department faculty. However, it came to my attention through interviews with both dual credit English faculty and students that not all faculty were using the same text. One faculty member noted that the school system in which she taught had purchased the texts so that the students would not have to bear such costs, and, because this was a school investment, she had received permission from the college's division chair to continue using the texts even though the official course text (as approved by the full-time English department faculty) had been changed. Economics in this case drove a curricular decision.

Related to this situation, based on my experiences in the English department I knew that on occasion full-time faculty had been asked to select texts primarily suited for dual credit English. Boyer also confirmed this, stating, "We have actually been told 'remember dual credit people are buying two sets of books, and so if you can find everything in one book, keep the cost down.'" While Boyer, Duncan, and I recognized the economic reality, we also believed that textbook selection should be based on what would be the best teaching tool for all ENG 111 and ENG 112 students and did not think full-time faculty should be pressured to make special concessions to accommodate dual credit English students. To do so could not only compromise the quality of all ENG 111 and 112 courses but also call into question the comparable quality of the dual credit English program.

Faculty Selection Issues

Even though it seemed that the use of approved course outlines and texts was not being carefully monitored, I was pleased to find that there was very careful monitoring to ensure that Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' accreditation criteria were being met. While this was reassuring in one sense, it did bring up a related concern regarding faculty selection. In most cases, there is only one credentialed faculty member at each participating high school. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' accreditation criteria dictate that all faculty teaching dual credit courses must meet the same standards required of full-time or adjunct faculty. In the case of dual credit English, this means that all faculty must have a master's degree with a minimum of eighteen credit hours in English. All faculty teaching dual credit English do meet these requirements, and those faculty I interviewed indicated that they do enjoy teaching dual credit courses. However, it is possible that there could be an instance in which the only credentialed faculty at a participating high school might not want to teach the course or might not be an effective teacher. If that were the case, it is likely that the teacher would be required to teach anyway, regardless of desire. This could lead to a situation in which instruction might suffer. Similarly, if problems with instruction are identified with any dual credit teacher and no other qualified teachers are available, the question arises of how the problem would be addressed. Would the teacher be allowed to continue teaching? Would the school system hire another credentialed faculty? Would a full-time faculty member be sent to take care of the problem, and, if so, what would be the implications in terms of the financial agreements between the two institutions? Such possibilities raise serious issues regarding the quality of instruction. The problem becomes an issue for both the community college and the public school system and could be complicated to handle.

High School Faculty Perspectives

The interviews confirmed some of the feelings expressed by community college English faculty but also brought to light a number of other significant issues. Two dual credit English faculty seemed to share the predominantly negative overall perception of the program. One was

the faculty member who declined to allow taping of our interview session and even then consented to an interview only on condition of anonymity. Her opening comment was "I hope you are going to get rid of this program." The other faculty member, whom I am choosing not to name to protect her identity, said, "I actually went to the guidance counselor and I said, 'What can we do to get rid of this because [students] are not ready for it?' It's such a shock to them. They're struggling. They're frustrated. There are just so many issues that are factoring in that I thought they should do away with it." Both of these faculty did identify some positive features of the program, but their overall perceptions remained decidedly negative.

Time- and Cost-saving Features for Advanced Students

In contrast to the perceptions of the two faculty noted above, as well as to the perceptions of full-time community college faculty, most other dual credit faculty do see some program advantages. Some faculty believe the program provides a valuable service for students who excel academically. They like being able to challenge students with college-level work. Linda Price pointed out, "I enjoy teaching dual credit. You have students who are more self-motivated [than in some other high school courses]." Faculty also believe the program is beneficial because it gives students a head-start on their college careers. Amy Newman noted, "I do think it's an opportunity for students to ease into the college classes and not take so many at once and get a better feel for the expectations and requirements at college level. It is beneficial financially because it's paid for and students like that. But I think they have the opportunity to ease into the college courses is the best thing." Ruth McMillian voiced a similar perspective: "I think that qualified high school seniors are given a tremendous opportunity to finish their high school requirements while earning freshman college credit. The only cost to the student is the price of his or her texts. In addition to the monetary savings, the students get a 'taste' of college work."

In some cases, faculty noted that the college-level work is an eye-opening experience for students and helps them not only to realize what college work will be like but also motivates them to study harder in other high school courses. Mary Burton said:

> Chiefly the kids who genuinely are advanced students don't have to waste the time taking college English when they get to college, or their parents waste their money. My daughter's a good example. She was in a program last year. She's at a four-year university now, and without dual credit English, she would have had to take two semesters of English. She got to skip those, and so she took other classes in their place and added a class and just wanted to take one class in the summer. That puts her a full semester ahead of everybody else. That was the first little stepping stone to her graduating in three years instead of four.

In this case, the dual credit faculty member saw dual credit English as a very positive program, whereby students were able to avoid unnecessary course duplication and work toward achieving their educational goals more quickly than would have been possible without the dual credit program.

Course Transferability

Burton and other faculty also pointed out that the articulation agreements are such that a large number of colleges and universities, including several out-of-state institutions, do accept the dual credit English for transfer students, a situation which is a major advantage for students. Similarly, Barbara Graham said, "My students seem to appreciate the fact that they can do their freshman English at their high school." This comment could be interpreted to mean that students preferred the high school environment, which would be understandable considering students likely were familiar with the faculty and their teaching. At the same time, students may have also been more comfortable taking a college-level courses with peers with whom they were already familiar as well. Graham also commented that the dual credit English classes in many cases have fewer students enrolled, thus providing the advantage of more time for one-on-one instruction than students might have if they enrolled in a regular freshman-level composition course.

Lack of Student Preparation

While faculty recognize program advantages, several dual credit English faculty do have concerns about the program. Similar to Boyer's contention that dual credit English graduates are often not prepared for subsequent college-level writing, Newman argued that rising high school seniors are not adequately prepared for freshman composition courses:

> Their reasoning skills aren't strong. When you take writing, you must see connections. You, as the writer, are responsible for explaining this to the reader, and you must make all the connections. And you must explain everything. I show them, "Look, this thought does not go with this thought. There's a gap. Do you see how that doesn't connect?" No, they don't see it. They cannot see it. And I can talk to them, and they think I'm being difficult and I'm being nit picky, and I just don't understand what they mean.

Newman also expressed concern about students not being ready for college-level work: "They jump from a junior level to a college level, and they are not prepared in many cases for the level and the expectations for writing. They haven't had, in my opinion, enough experiences writing. They really haven't done the writing process as often as they should have, and they haven't had to write as in depth. It's very difficult. It's very hard for them." Newman further pointed out that students do not have the life experiences to draw from and therefore often have difficulty in finding topics about which to write. This is of particular concern because dual credit English students are required to use college texts that are written on a level that assumes students are high school graduates, thus possibly putting high school students at a disadvantage.

Burton also contended that a major concern with dual credit English is that students are not mature enough to handle college-level work. Burton commented:

> The chief disadvantage is that students who are not ready to handle college-level work take the class and then moan and whine, and their parents scream and whine. The class I'm teaching this year is a good example. I have 24 or 25 students. I don't normally teach classes where somebody doesn't make an A. No students in that class have an A for the semester. Four or maybe five of them have a B. And the rest are C's, D's, and unfortunately F's. It's simply students would not do their own work. At the most I might ask for an hour to an hour and a half of homework per night. And they just won't do it, and so then they fail. I told them at the beginning, I said, "Guys, this is a college class." They're not ready for the realities of college. They think the teacher doesn't like me, she's mean or whatever. I don't think that they sit there and think, oh this is what college will be like.

Again, the high school setting influences student behavior and teacher reaction. Perhaps because the courses are taught in the high school, students do not seem to take the classes as seriously as they might if the courses were taught or taken on a regular college campus. As Burton noted, students sometimes think she is being "too hard" or "mean," perceptions that they might not have if the courses were being taught by a teacher whom they did not already know.

Burton's comment also brings up another problem related to maturity: the fact that students in dual credit English courses are often accustomed to earning A's on their writing assignments, and while their high school work may be at an A-level, their work in college composition may receive only average grades. Newman noted:

> They still expect, in many cases, to be treated as the high school student or pampered a little bit more, understood a little bit more about reasons they can't do, haven't done [their work],

> maybe because they have a track meet or something. They have a very hard time. And it's a hard adjustment. It's a very hard adjustment for them. And the grading scale is one of the main things that they just can't understand. They're usually students who have gotten A's and B's and they don't understand even though I emphasize regularly and take a lot of time going over what constitutes an A and a B and a C and all that is laid out for them. But a C usually means adequate, acceptable, college-level work. And that is good. They don't see that. They think that they're supposed to come in and make A's or B's. And they don't know how to handle that. They don't accept, at this age. They want to place blame oftentimes. They don't want to say this is a learning process and writing is not like biology class where maybe you memorize information. And they've been allowed to. In many classes teachers are so happy to get somebody to turn something in that the quality may not have been as it should have been. It may have even been late, but they're just so happy to get it, it's been accepted. So when they come up against criteria that says if it's late, that affects the grade or these are the rules and these are the consequences. So it's a shocker. And they complain. Some adjust better than others. Some are more mature than others.

Here, Newman identifies additional issues involving grades. As she points out, at least in some situations, high school students may not be accustomed to the consequences of their failure to meet deadlines. This is not to condone the lack of rigor but simply to acknowledge that it does exist. When faculty impose such consequences, students often are shocked and, not surprising, find fault with the teacher rather than accept responsibility for their own failure. Also, the

difference in grading scales is particularly frustrating to these students, and often their parents complain that the high school teacher is being unfair. This can cause serious problems, particularly if high school administration does not support the teacher. The teacher may be trying to uphold college standards only to be told that he or she is being too tough and asked to lower his or her standards. In one situation, when a new dual credit English teacher took over a program following another faculty member's retirement, enrollment dropped from an average of twenty to twenty-five students to only eight or ten. Apparently students and parents felt that the course was too difficult and preferred skipping the dual credit opportunity in order to maintain a higher high school grade-point average.

Faculty Grading Practices

Whether or not students and parents complain about dual credit English course grades, many dual credit English faculty expressed concern about their own grading practices, often wondering if they were being too strict or not strict enough. One faculty member in particular worried that her grading scale was not strict enough and had taken the initiative to ask the division chair to review some of essays she had graded. She indicated this had been a very helpful assessment and that she thought her grading was more in line with community college standards. Several faculty expressed this type of uncertainty about grading during their interviews. Burton pointed out that she thought dual credit teachers who had taught as adjunct faculty for the community college were probably in a better position to teach the dual credit English than those faculty who had not. She said, "When I first started here, I was too easy. But then you learn that you are and you get harder. And so I think if I had just been just a high school teacher with a master's degree who had never taught [at Wytheville Community College as an adjunct instructor] and I was handed this class, I don't think I would have upheld the standards as I try to do." Other than Burton, no current dual credit English faculty have taught other courses for Wytheville Community College.

Loss of Some Senior English Course Content

Related to concerns regarding grading issues and students' lack of maturity, several faculty also pointed out that a major drawback of the program is that students miss out on much of the literature they would normally cover during their year of senior English. This was of particular concern for McMillian, who noted that even though students do study some major pieces of literature, literature is not the primary focus of ENG 111 and 112. McMillian commented, "[D]ual credit English students do not get the survey of English literature that other seniors get." She said that she tried to work in as much of the literature from senior English as possible, but time constraints made it impossible to cover everything. McMillian's sentiments were echoed by Rebecca Miller who commented that the program was doing these students a disservice by causing them to miss out on the opportunity to study many of the classics. Similarly, Newman said, "I think students should just take their senior English and do the freshman English too. I don't feel that I can send these students to college without having been exposed to *Beowolf* and Chaucer. And so I'm trying to do all." Even though dual credit classes are generally scheduled to have more contact hours than regular sections of ENG 111 and 112, the additional time is not such that faculty are able to cover all of the material for senior English and all of the college requirements. Because the ultimate goal is the college credit, components of senior English have to be sacrificed when there are time limitations.

High School Setting Issues

Another consideration of the program is that dual credit English students taking courses in the high school setting generally are enrolled with classmates that they know well. This would not likely be the case if students enrolled in a regular freshman composition course either at Wytheville Community College or at another college or university. In these cases, students would likely be placed in classes with people they do not know. Students in a "regular" college course would also probably be exposed to a much more diverse student population than they will encounter in their native high schools. This is not to say that this is necessarily an advantage or disadvantage; it is simply to say that the experiences are not comparable. It is possible that

exposure to such diversity might also affect student attitudes and ultimately writing experience. Newman pointed out: "The fact is that they're still in a high school setting and going to a quote 'college level' class, but they're still in the classroom with the same students that they've gone to school with their entire lives, and they're still surrounded by all the high school aura, if you will; they can't really separate themselves from the high school." This, again, may contribute to students' lack of understanding of the course standards; coupled with immaturity, students frequently find fault with the teacher, which may lead to additional problems.

When asked whether or not she thought that the dual credit English courses should be taught on campus and high school students have to come there to take the courses, Newman replied: "Maybe you should do it. That would help. Do it there. They need to be around other people. Another thing is immaturity, and because they're still with the same people, they act differently. You would not do that on a college campus." She said she thought they would be less likely to go to a professor and question a grade or go to other English faculty and question another faculty member's grade. Newman noted:

> I would have never taken my paper to another professor at the college. But these students are still here in a high school setting. And when they're with their buddies, they tend to get more cliques and in little groups, and it actually affects the teacher trying to teach. Because you have all these dynamics which you would not have in a class where students will come from different schools and different areas and different backgrounds, and different ages. I don't think students would act as immature.

Burton expressed similar concern about dual credit English being taught in the high school setting:

> I think what is missing by teaching the class in the high school setting is really two things. To teach this class well, it's very

> helpful to have a college atmosphere. Like some of the things that you discuss in literature, some of the things that you write about and discuss, they're embarrassed to do before their peers who've known them since they were two years old and pre-school. And I have known them five years. You can go away to college and write about the time you found out your father was homosexual and nobody cares. You can hardly do that in that setting. I think that's the impersonality of it.

When asked if there was anything she would like to change, Burton said:

> I would much prefer that it be taught on campus and let kids come [to Wytheville Community College]. I think that would relieve most of the disadvantages we talked about. And I would choose for someone on the [full-time] staff to teach it because I think if they came to WCC and you taught them, a stranger, they would immediately feel I'm in college; I have to work harder to impress her, kind of feeling. See I taught these kids in 8th and 9th grade. It's just the same old thing for them. They just think I'm meaner now. And I would much prefer to have it taught [at Wytheville Community College]. I know that's not possible for some of the schools.

As Burton noted, having student take dual credit English on campus would be possible for those students who lived near Wytheville Community College, but geographically it would be difficult, if not impossible, for students in other parts of the college's service region to commute to the main campus during the regular school day.

The issue of the courses being taught in the high school setting is a key reason that the University of Virginia cites for refusing to accept dual credit English courses for anything other than elective credit. As noted in Chapter 3, it is argued that courses taught in the high school

setting cannot be comparable to those taught on a college campus. One of the specific examples used in the argument is that high school classes experience high school-related interruptions that would not occur in classes taught on campus. Because of this expressed concern, I specifically asked dual credit English faculty (and dual credit English graduates and currently enrolled students—see Chapter 5) how frequently the dual credit English classes were interrupted. I was pleased to learn that in several schools, dual credit English courses were scheduled during the period nearest lunch which meant that these classes were rarely, if ever, interrupted. However, this was not the case in every school. One dual credit English faculty, who will remain anonymous, responded as follows to the question regarding interruptions:

> Occasionally there are some club meetings. For example, the National Honor Society meets sometimes. But usually it's only part of the period. They're not out the whole block. Sometimes there are field trips. I have had students who've gone to cheerleading camps and so forth and had to miss. But most of the time they're very conscientious students who make up their work. So it doesn't become a problem. I would say that there's not an interruption over probably once every two to three weeks at the most.

While this faculty member did not consider interruptions that occurred every two or three weeks to be a problem, this type of situation would not likely occur if the courses were being taught on campus and, therefore, confirms, at least in this instance, UVA's concern.

Placement Testing

Both dual credit faculty and community college faculty also identified several other program issues that are of concern, though these were not seen as being as serious as those previously discussed. Among these is the issue of placement. As noted in Chapter 1 or 2, dual credit students are required to meet the same placement requirements as all other community college students. As with any placement test, both the English Qualifying Exam and the

Conventions of Written English tests came under fire. Unfortunately, no placement test is completely accurate, and faculty sometimes questioned results. Many dual credit faculty (as well as other high school faculty and parents) disapproved of the tests because they were standardized multiple-choice tests; some faculty argued that this type of test was not appropriate for determining a students' writing abilities. Others pointed out that some students are quite adept at taking standardized tests but may not be strong writers. Community college faculty tended to agree that standardized testing was not the best placement method but knew that realistically it would be impossible for a small department to manage the task of reading hundreds of placement writing samples. It is too soon to know exactly how the new COMPASS/ASSET testing that has recently been adopted by the entire Virginia Community College System will be accepted.

Another criticism of the placement testing focused on the fact that often students were required to take developmental courses. This was of particular concern in terms of the dual credit English program because, according to *the Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*, developmental courses could not be taught for dual credit. When students desiring to enroll in dual credit English during their senior year of high school did not pass the placement test, they were required to complete developmental courses on their own during summer school. The students had to bear the cost of developmental courses, as well as likely travel to the college's main campus if they wanted to take courses during the day. Some faculty argued that the college used a particularly difficult test so students would be required to take extra developmental courses, thus increasing overall college enrollment. Not unexpectedly full-time faculty adamantly denied such allegations; nonetheless, this perception prevailed. Burton cited her own experience teaching as an adjunct, indicating that whenever she had students she believed had been wrongly placed into developmental courses, she had simply gone to the division chair and asked that the students be re-tested. She reported that in every situation the division chair had accommodated her requests and the students had been placed in the appropriate level courses.

A related problem was the fact that dual credit faculty and administrators often argued that some of their best students were "not good test takers" and therefore should have been allowed to enroll in dual credit English. Several dual credit English faculty and high school administrators suggested the college consider basing placement on high school faculty recommendations, but community college faculty and administrators do not endorse this type of placement because of its subjectivity. Full-time faculty argue that there are relatively few instances in which students are erroneously placed in developmental courses. Naturally this belief is not popular among dual credit faculty because placement in developmental courses indicates a clear lack of adequate preparation, which calls into question the quality of high school instruction.

While full-time faculty generally defended the placement testing, some faculty wondered if exceptions were made to appease high school administrators or dual credit faculty. One high school administrator I interviewed confirmed that he had "slipped some students in" when they had not passed the placement test. His admission was surprising and confirmed some suspicions, though this may have been an isolated incident. No other data provided substantiating evidence that this type of policy violation occurred.

Lack of Adequate Faculty Communication

Another issue involving the dual credit English program that is a concern to faculty is the lack of regular communication among dual credit teachers and community college faculty. From the community college perspective, communication between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty is problematic in general. It is particularly problematic with dual credit English faculty because in many instances these faculty rarely, if ever, come to the Wytheville Community College campus since they teach their classes in the high school setting. This means that there is little opportunity for interaction, formal or informal. Faculty on campus may discuss pedagogical or classroom management issues, and dual credit English faculty who are not there obviously are not able to contribute or to benefit from such discussions. One might argue that this is true also of the relationship between full-time and adjunct faculty in general or that the issues facing dual credit

English teachers are different from those facing full-time faculty (dealing with high school administrators and parents, for instance). At the same time, though, it can be argued that even informal discussions about grading papers or how to respond to a student's question on an essay could certainly be beneficial to both full-time and dual credit English faculty.

In defense of the community college English department, a contact/mentoring program is in place to try to ensure that at least some communication between the two constituent groups occurs. When I began teaching at Wytheville Community College in 1990, the division chair explained that one of my responsibilities as a full-time English department faculty would be a "contact person" or "mentor" to several adjunct faculty. This would include both adjuncts who taught regular English courses, as well as dual credit English faculty. From one perspective I perceived this to be a very positive program. As a beginning teacher, I would have the opportunity to meet adjunct faculty and learn from them. I also assumed that as I became a more seasoned teacher, perhaps I could share information that would be beneficial to them. I saw the assignment as a mutual learning experience. However, when I learned more about the list of faculty I was assigned, I must admit that I was a bit intimidated. I was twenty-five years old at the time and had been teaching only part time for three years prior to accepting the position at Wytheville Community College. The faculty I was asked to contact/mentor had all been teaching for many years and were far older than I. This was particularly true of the dual credit English faculty, many of whom had taught for at least twenty years. My initial contacts with these teachers were pleasant, but I suspect they were as unsure about my being able to serve as a "mentor" as was I.

For the first two or three years, the contacts were superficial at best. I would call faculty and ask how things were going. Generally faculty would say fine and indicate there were no questions. Admittedly I did not initiate as much communication as I probably should have—partly because of my own sense of intimidation and partly because of the tremendous workload with which both I and other faculty were faced. It was when the problem noted in the introduction of this dissertation occurred that my relationship with dual credit English faculty began to change. When Price asked me to help her with the issue of whether or not both

sections of dual credit English had to be offered in a single semester due to her school's implementation of block scheduling, I was in a position to gain her respect, as well as to begin focusing attention on the whole issue of dual credit English.

This whole issue of intimidation in the contact/mentoring process at that time was probably unique to me because the other members of the English department were veteran teachers and also age contemporaries of most of the dual credit English faculty. However, as time passed, additional faculty—both full-time and dual credit--were hired, and I believe they had similar experiences. Duncan noted that he was assigned to work with a few part-time faculty but none of the dual credit faculty. He admitted that his interaction with the faculty he was assigned was minimal at best.

It should also be noted that in terms of my experience with the contact/mentoring of dual credit English faculty, I was probably at an advantage over some of the full-time faculty who were subsequently hired because I had grown up in the community and knew some of the faculty through some of my own former teachers and from living in the community. Even though I did not know the dual credit English teachers, some of them at least knew my name or face. Duncan was not from the area and therefore had no connection to any of these individuals other than through Wytheville Community College.

While conducting research for this project, I asked all of the constituencies I interviewed if they favored more frequent contact. Both full-time and dual credit English faculty expressed a desire to meet more regularly. Price commented, "I think that if we could meet maybe once each semester and exchange ideas about things that we did. I think that would be beneficial. I like swapping teaching ideas with other people and things that they had success with and things that they do."

Likewise, community college faculty thought periodic meetings of English faculty would be beneficial. However, when asked about her perception of the contact/mentoring program and increased communication, Boyer offered the following observation:

> Theoretically I think it's a good idea. In practicality, I think it's just heaping more on the teacher, and quite frankly I think we're asking way too much. I thought I was hired to teach. But I really don't have time to teach—committee work and all this extra activity stuff, you know you just don't have time to teach any more, and I think high school's probably as bad or worse than we are. And I think we are just adding another responsibility. I think [mentoring] is a good idea, but I'm not sure how much time people could spend with it. And I'm a firm believer, if you're going to mentor the program, you have to have people who are dedicated, who are willing to give time and be responsible people who are committed to it. And at this point, I'm not really sure that we're going to find that.

Boyer's point is well taken. Faculty at both institutions bear heavy workloads, and even though faculty recognize the value of increased interaction, time does not always permit such communication to occur.

Even if faculty have the time to meet, the logistics of planning such meetings will likely prove difficult as well. The academic calendars of the separate institutions pose one problem. High school faculty generally begin the school year in early August while full-time faculty are not under contract until mid-August. Scheduled in-service/professional development activities rarely coincide, nor do most breaks other than holiday breaks which are obviously not good times to meet. Community college faculty generally finish the academic year in mid-May while high schools rarely complete their year until early to mid-June. Even if a common time can be found, there is the issue of travel since the high schools are located throughout the college's service region and may require anywhere from a few minutes' drive to almost an hour drive for people to meet. This poses not only a time factor but also an economic factor. Someone will have to pay for the travel of faculty to meet, whether it be faculty themselves or their school districts. As noted with the difficulty of finding time to meet, it may mean that faculty (college or dual

credit) have to miss class time to participate, and for high school faculty this involves the hiring of a substitute. Similarly, community college faculty may have to secure a substitute (which would be difficult if all English faculty wish to meet) or resort to canceling class, which is an unwanted disruption to instruction.

Conclusions

Obviously, faculty perspectives on the dual credit English program are one of the most critical components of any program study. Faculty identified numerous program strengths and weaknesses that should be valuable in recommending program improvements.

Unlike perspectives that were generally positive from both high school and community college administrators, faculty perspectives tended to be more divisive. Full-time community college English faculty expressed more concerns about dual credit English than positive feedback. Faculty began by noting that disregard for their input during program implementation had likely tainted their views of the dual credit English program which, in turn, was linked to a philosophical concern. Faculty worried that students in dual credit English were missing out on opportunities to practice writing and subsequently develop stronger writing skills. Beyond these issues, faculty were also skeptical that administrators might allow enrollment benefits to overshadow any concerns regarding student learning that faculty might have.

Also, community college English faculty pointed out that dual credit graduates were often poorly prepared for subsequent college-level courses. Experiences with some dual credit English faculty led to further questions about course quality. One full-time English faculty observed all dual credit English faculty during one semester and found that one teacher was seriously unprepared to teach class despite having previous notification of an observation. Another teacher substituted *Cliff's Notes* for the regular course text, and yet another was not adhering to the approved course outline. Other dual credit faculty were also not using approved course texts. While full-time faculty acknowledged that dual credit English faculty were properly credentialed, it was also noted that in most situations, there was only one credentialed faculty member available to teach the class which raised issues about faculty desire to teach the

courses. Furthermore, a teacher's having the necessary credentials did not guarantee an effective teacher.

Despite these predominately negative perspectives of full-time community college English faculty, dual credit English faculty were much more positive. Most saw dual credit English as a challenging opportunity for advanced students. The time- and cost-saving features of the program, coupled with the transferability of the courses to most state-supported colleges and universities, were cited as additional program benefits.

At the same time, dual credit English faculty did identify some areas of concern. Faculty complained that some high school students were not adequately prepared for college-level courses, particularly in terms of maturity levels. Also, faculty expressed concerns about grading, sometimes wondering if their grading practices were in line with those of full-time faculty. Some faculty feared students were losing too much senior English course content by combining the senior English course with the freshman composition courses. Faculty also speculated that dual credit English students were not getting an equivalent experience in terms of classmates by taking the courses in the high school setting with already familiar peers.

These differing faculty opinions of the dual credit English program illuminated the need for increased contact between community college English faculty and dual credit English faculty, as well as for stronger communication among all constituencies involved in the program.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH

Research Methodology

Administrative and faculty perspectives were obviously important to a study of Wytheville Community College's dual credit English program, but student perspectives were also an essential component of the study since the ultimate goal of dual credit English is to provide a quality educational program. I wanted to talk to both currently enrolled students as well as program graduates. I chose to begin by tracking program graduates, assuming that graduates might provide information that would be helpful to have before interviewing currently enrolled students.

Interviews

I obtained historical lists of students enrolled in dual credit English programs at all of the participating high schools. I considered developing a survey instrument, but I knew that response rates tend to be low. Also, because the program dated back to 1988, I knew that many of the available addresses would likely be incorrect, increasing the odds of a low response rate. I decided instead to continue using in-depth interviews. As Miles and Huberman point out, "Qualitative samples tend to be *purposive*, rather than random," and this was the case with my study (27). I reviewed lists of dual credit English graduates from the two previous years in an attempt to identify any students who were currently attending Wytheville Community College. In cooperation with full-time English faculty who encouraged students to consent to interviews, I was able to interview at least one student from each of the participating high schools. However, I wanted also to determine how well the dual credit English program had prepared students who had transferred to four-year colleges and universities. At the same time, I wanted to talk to students who had completed the program less recently. In an attempt to accomplish both goals, I contacted some of the dual credit English faculty and asked them to go over lists of students with me. I realize this introduced an additional bias into the research because faculty were at

liberty to select only the "best" or their "favorite" students. This may, in fact, have occurred. However, I do believe that the faculty were honest and did not deliberately try to sabotage the project. In each case, faculty reviewed the lists and provided me with information regarding which college or university students were attending or had attended.

Based on that information, I then narrowed the list, trying to select an equal number of male and female students, although in the end I did interview more females than males. I also tried to select only one or two students from any one college or university (other than Wytheville Community College) and was fortunate to be able to include one student who was attending a private college instead of a state-supported institution and one student who was attending an out-of-state university. All students I contacted agreed to participate in the research. While I conducted interviews with graduates who were attending Wytheville Community College in person, I had to interview most graduates at other colleges and universities via telephone. As recorded in field notes, there were pros and cons to each setting. On the one hand, being able to interview students in person provided the additional data available through physical observation (facial expressions, body language, etc.). On the other hand, most of these interviews occurred in my college office, and students who did not know me prior to the interview situation may have been more intimidated by surroundings than those students who were interviewed over the telephone. Nonetheless, interviews with graduates provided particularly rich data (see Appendix H for a list of interview questions). In one situation, in particular, a graduate reported having completed only a few of the required assignments, so I deliberately sought out additional students from that particular dual credit English program to confirm the finding. This was in keeping with Miles and Huberman's contention that "[s]amples in qualitative studies are usually not wholly prespecified, but can evolve once fieldwork begins. Initial choices of informants lead you to similar or different ones" (27). In this situation, I modified the sample to include additional graduates from the particular high school in question, and these students did confirm the initial discovery. The use of qualitative methodology, I believe, elicited stronger data than a survey instrument would have in terms of program graduates.

Currently Enrolled Dual Credit English Students

Focus Group Research

I gleaned valuable information from research centering on graduate perspectives through in-depth interviews. Even though I knew that interviews with currently enrolled students would likely provide additional rich data, I recognized that I needed to employ other research methods to increase the validity and reliability of the overall study, so I chose to conduct two focus group sessions as another component of the research methodology. Focus groups offered the opportunity to obtain information from a fairly large number of students in a relatively economical period of time. According to David L. Morgan, this is a particular advantage of using focus groups: "The same number of participants can be interviewed in much less time in a group format and with a further savings in analysis time because fewer transcripts are required" (19). This methodology also seemed particularly useful with currently enrolled dual credit English students because I assumed that high school students would not be accustomed to interview situations. I anticipated that the group setting would probably be less intimidating than if I interviewed each student individually. At the same time I also recognized that students in focus groups might feel less free to share differing opinions among a group of peers than if they were interviewed individually. Therefore, focus groups were only one component of the overall research design in terms of currently enrolled students.

When I was ready to set up the focus groups, I contacted two dual credit English faculty from two different participating school systems. Both teachers had worked with the program from its inception, and I asked each for permission to conduct a focus group session with her respective class. I deliberately tried to schedule the focus group sessions near the end of the academic year for two reasons. Primarily I thought this would provide the best possible data because students would have completed ENG 111 and should be nearing completion of ENG 112. That would allow students to comment on their entire dual credit English experiences. A second reason for scheduling the interviews near the end of the semester was an attempt to disrupt instruction as little as possible. This worked particularly well with the

focus group at Pineville High School because the dual credit English faculty also sponsored the student yearbook, and all of the students on the yearbook staff were also enrolled in dual credit English. The period designated for work on the yearbook had become a study hall because work on the yearbook was complete; therefore, there was no disruption of class at all at that school. The dual credit English teacher at Oakfield High School suggested that I schedule the focus group session there during the last week of classes. I found a time after students had completed their course exam but when they were still required to be in class for a few days before graduation.

My request to both dual credit English faculty was to have six or eight students participate in each focus group session. Both teachers asked how they should select students to participate. Again, the situation at Pineville High School was particularly good because the eight students on the yearbook staff were essentially pre-selected without teacher or researcher bias. The faculty member indicated that it should be basically a random sample because the group included students who were earning both good and not-so-good grades in dual credit English, with a balance, also, of male and female students. At Oakfield High School the teacher indicated that she did not want to select students and invited me to come during a time when all students would be there. The class had an enrollment of fifteen, which was more than is recommended for a focus group session. However, upon my arrival at the school, my choices were to include all students or select only a few and have the others left with no assignment. I already felt indebted to the teacher for allowing me to do the research, so I did not insist on the smaller number. Instead, I simply worked with the group of fifteen.

I was able to audio tape the focus group at Oakfield High School, but equipment failure at Pineville High School prevented me from taping that session. Because of the problem at Pineville High School, I tried to take very careful notes during the focus group, as well as record as much as possible in field notes. While I did have the recording of the focus group session at Oakfield High School, transcription of the tape was difficult, particularly considering there were so many students participating who often talked simultaneously. I had anticipated that would be

a problem as I was taping the session and, again, tried to take good notes and do follow-up field notes.

Throughout the process of conducting the focus group sessions and in-depth interviews, I maintained a log of field notes. I attempted to transcribe tapes as quickly as possible and began preliminary coding of the transcripts as each was completed. As is typical, and indeed desirable, with most qualitative studies, analysis occurred alongside data collection and, in many cases, shaped the research design as the study progressed.

Survey Research

In addition to this qualitative methodology, I did opt to incorporate a quantitative component into the overall research design through the use of a survey instrument that was administered to dual credit English students during spring semester 2000. Adding this quantitative component served two purposes. First, I believed that a mixed methodological study, though admittedly weighted qualitatively, would increase the validity and reliability of the project. At the same time a survey instrument seemed far more practical for collecting data from a large number of currently enrolled students in a timely fashion than additional interviews would have been. A survey also served to solicit individual information that I might not have obtained through the focus groups.

The survey consisted of twenty-one open-ended questions designed to determine the opinions of currently enrolled dual credit English students (see Appendix I for a copy of the survey instrument and Appendix J for a summary of survey results). I developed survey questions based on information I had already collected during interviews with the various constituencies. In accordance with my proposal approved by the Institutional Review Board, I contacted the superintendent of each participating school system and obtained written permission to conduct the survey. In asking for permission to survey students, I included a copy of the survey instrument and the cover letter explaining the research project and consent forms that would accompany a copy of each survey. The cover letter was addressed to the parent or guardian of the students; the letter explained the nature of the research and pointed out surveys

would be completed anonymously and that no student would be penalized for non-participation. I included a phone number and address where I could be reached if there were questions. Once I received permission from senior administration to proceed with the survey, I was able to contact all except one faculty member who never returned my phone calls. I personally contacted all of the other participating dual credit English faculty to explain the nature of my research project and to provide instructions for administering the survey, emphasizing that students should in no way be coerced to participate against their will. I also reiterated that only those students who returned signed parental consent forms were to complete the survey.

Ninety-seven students from six of the seven participating high schools completed the surveys. Some students forgot to get permission forms signed, and in accordance with established guidelines, these students did not complete the surveys. Comments from faculty indicated that this was an issue of students forgetting to have the parental consent forms signed as opposed to refusal to participate.

Because of the nature of the research, I wanted to try to assure students' anonymity. Instructions on the surveys specifically asked students not to identify themselves, their teachers, or their school systems. In this regard students should have felt comfortable in answering the questions honestly.

Review of the survey results indicated that the majority of students responded to all questions. These data were compared to information obtained from the focus group research, as well as with data from graduate interviews. Such triangulation of data strengthened the overall study; Miles and Huberman pointed out that "having different kinds of measurements...provides repeated verification" (267). Survey results were also compared to data available from the college's regular annual survey of dual credit students.

Grade Analysis

A final component of research on student perspectives of dual credit English included an analysis of student grades to determine how well dual credit English was preparing students for

subsequent college and career writing. During my interviews with dual credit graduates, I asked students to comment on this issue. Even though I was pleased to learn that the majority of graduates believed their experiences in dual credit English had adequately prepared them for such subsequent writing, I recognized that these data were self-reported. To further substantiate how well dual credit English was preparing graduates for subsequent writing, I examined data available through Wytheville Community College's Student Information System. I obtained rosters of all sections of dual credit English offered from fall semester 1988 to spring semester 2000. I then identified 445 students who had enrolled in additional non-dual credit courses at Wytheville Community College. In some cases, these students had taken only one course, but in other cases students had completed certificate or degree programs. I looked at several factors. Using a matrix, I charted the name of each high school, the dual credit English teacher, the semester in which students completed a dual credit English course, the course grade, the total number of credits earned, the cumulative grade point average, and whether or not the student had graduated. Additionally, I looked at student grades in subsequent courses that I believed would likely have been "writing intensive." Such courses included literature, history, sociology, psychology, political science, and speech; I chose speech courses not necessarily because they might have been writing intensive but rather because they required use of organizational skills that are part of the core requirements of ENG 111 and 112. I analyzed the data by comparing grades earned in dual credit English courses to grades earned in these "writing intensive" courses (see Appendix K for a summary of the grade analysis).

Research Findings

Knowledge of the Program

One of the research goals was to determine how the students had first learned about their option to enroll in dual credit English courses. Most of the graduates indicated they had learned about the course in one of three ways: (1) from other students who had taken the courses, in some cases a sibling; (2) from guidance counselors; and (3) from high school English department faculty. Because the sample of students I interviewed included primarily recent

graduates (from the previous five years), it was not surprising that a common form of course "publicity" was word of mouth since at that point the course had become a standard curricular offering at most of the high schools. Rachel, a student from Rockford High School, remembered learning about the dual credit English program from other students. Leigh Anne, a student from Middleton High School, and Saran, a student from Parkdale High School, both indicted that siblings had taken the dual credit classes and had encouraged them to enroll.

Numerous students noted that high school guidance counselors had told them about the program and/or encouraged them to enroll. Jessica, a student from Lincoln High School, said she learned about the dual credit English course from guidance counselors; "When I went in there [the guidance department office], my grades were good, and they [guidance counselors] didn't think I would have much of a challenge of going into just a regular high school course." Another student named Marsha from Pineville High School noted that she learned about the course through her eleventh grade English teacher and a presentation given by her guidance counselor. Chad, a student from Parkdale High School, indicated that his dual credit English teacher had encouraged him to take the course. David, a graduate of Rockford High School, reported that he already knew about the program because he had previously taken dual credit math courses. This was also the case with Tiffany, another student from Parkdale High School, who said that she had taken other dual credit courses in math and biology during her junior year of high school and was, therefore, familiar with dual credit courses. It should be noted that at Wytheville Community College, only high school seniors may enroll in dual credit English courses; this is not true in courses in other disciplines in which high school juniors are allowed to enroll. This is a Wytheville Community College policy and differs at other community colleges in the Virginia Community College System.

Interviews with administrators and faculty involved in the dual credit English program had suggested that high school guidance counselors and/or teachers in some instances might have been exerting pressure on students to take dual credit courses, but this did not prove to be the case with the students I interviewed. Only one student indicated any type of "pressure" to enroll. Keith, a graduate of Lincoln High School, stated:

> I think they [guidance counselors] showed [dual credit] as an option to everyone or at least to the people that they thought would be interested in it. And then some of the ones that had taken a lot of [other] dual credit classes, or honors classes, they [guidance counselors] pushed them to take it because they thought they would get more out of it or they would want to take it more than somebody else who hadn't had as many of those types of classes.

When asked if anyone had discouraged him from taking dual credit, he responded by saying, "Not really. A couple of students told me that it was really hard, that Ms. Price was a hard teacher, but other than that, I mean, they didn't really, you know, try to press it on me that I shouldn't take it." I did not consider warnings about the difficulty of the course to be "discouragement"; rather, it was desirable that students be aware of the expectations of dual credit English and be prepared to do college-level work. Keith's comment brought to light an important factor to consider regarding student comments about dual credit English; high school students, particularly in smaller rural schools with relatively small numbers of faculty, likely know the teachers who are dual credit English faculty or at least know the teachers' reputations. In some cases students may have already been in courses taught by these same faculty. This is unlike the situation on most college campuses where freshmen rarely know the faculty or faculty reputations. In this regard students' decisions to enroll or not to enroll in a dual credit English course may well be influenced in ways that are not likely comparable to decisions they might make if they were taking freshman composition courses in a non-dual credit situation.

One aspect of enrollment in dual credit English which I had not necessarily anticipated was how students in dual credit courses were perceived by their peers and how this influence might affect their decisions to enroll in dual credit English. One particularly interesting comment came from Leigh Anne, at Middleton High School, who talked at length about the prestige of being able to enroll in the courses. She said that "if you're in the Beta Club, you have to be in dual credit or you'd be embarrassed." The "prestige" factor could obviously be a motivating

factor for students to enroll in dual credit English, but, at the same time, it could also cause problems between dual credit English students and those who were not able to enroll.

Like graduates, currently enrolled students identified essentially the same categories of people who had played a role in their decisions to enroll in dual credit English. One survey question asked students how they first learned about dual credit English. Based on the responses obtained through graduate interviews, I anticipated that currently enrolled students would list other students, teachers, and guidance counselors as the source of initial program information. Survey data confirmed this, with fifty-three of the responding students (55 percent) indicating that guidance counselors provided program information. While this was an expected response, it was somewhat surprising that currently enrolled students listed "guidance counselors" as the main source of information they received. This finding indicates that the community college may need to take measures to ensure that guidance counselors have accurate information about dual credit English to provide to students. Thirty-one students (32 percent) listed a teacher as being the conveyor of information about dual credit English. Some students did specifically indicate that the teacher was the dual credit English faculty or other English department faculty; however, many students simply listed "teacher." This somewhat ambiguous information may well have resulted from the instructions provided for completion of the survey. Students were asked not to provide the names of teachers; this was an attempt to keep student responses anonymous but may well have affected the data received. A better question would likely have been to give a list of possible sources including "dual credit English teacher," "other English teachers," or "non-English department teachers." Nonetheless, it is clear that faculty are providing students with information about dual credit English, and it can be inferred that the information students received must have been at least generally positive since the students did, in fact, enroll in the course.

Another survey question solicited additional information regarding influence on student enrollment in dual credit English. The second survey question asked: "Who, if anyone, influenced your decision to enroll in dual credit English courses?" Confirming the responses from Question #1, thirty-seven students (38 percent) listed "teachers" as having influenced their

decisions to enroll. An equal number of students reported that "their parents" had influenced their decisions to take dual credit English courses. This was surprising in that most of the graduates I interviewed had indicated that their parents had little influence on their decisions to enroll in the courses. Twenty-two students (23 percent) indicated that "a guidance counselor" influenced their decisions, again confirming responses received from the first survey questions, though statistically not the same percentage.

A response I had not expected to receive in response to Question #2 was "myself." Twenty-one students (22 percent) responded that their decision to enroll was primarily influenced by their own motivation. One student wrote, "I don't believe I was influenced by anyone to take these classes; however, I feel I pushed myself to take this class because I wanted to." Another student stated, "I influenced myself because I wanted to take college classes." Yet another student asserted, "Myself, I firmly believed I had the potential." In these cases, it appears that the students were motivated either by a sense of wanting a challenge or because they believed they were capable of meeting the challenge of college-level courses. In other cases, some students who responded that they had made their own decisions may have interpreted the question to be asking if anyone had "pressured" them to take the class, as was indicated by one student who wrote, "No one, it was my own decision."

Information about how students gain initial knowledge about the dual credit English program is valuable for many reasons. Most importantly, it is incumbent on the college and the high schools to ensure that students and their parents fully understand the program. Because the courses are college-level courses, students and parents need to recognize the expectations are higher than those in a regular senior English course. More complex assignments, coupled with larger numbers of assignments, will likely affect the amount of time students will be required to study. This, in turn, will have an impact on the amount of time students have for assignments in other classes, as well as the time they have to devote to extracurricular activities. Also, students and parents need to be aware of the consequences of poor performance in dual credit English courses. Failure to pass the course can mean that the student does not graduate. Even if students pass dual credit English courses, the increased difficulty of such courses may lead to

the student earning lower grades than he or she might have received in senior English, thus affecting the student's overall grade-point average and perhaps even affecting his or her acceptance at other colleges or universities.

Parental Involvement in Students' Decisions Regarding Dual Credit English

In addition to determining how students gained initial knowledge of the dual credit English course availability, research sought information about the level of parental involvement in students' decisions to participate in the dual credit English program. Surprisingly, most students indicated that their parents played little, if any, role in their decisions to take the courses. Some graduates stated that their parents knew about the program only through information the students were able to relate to them. Morgan, from Oakfield High School, said: "I know there was no meeting [to inform parents about the dual credit English program] or anything like that. I may have had to have some stuff signed." Similarly, Jessica reported that her parents supported her decision to take dual credit English because "It helped me get here [Wytheville Community College], and plus it saved them money in the process," but she confirmed that her parents were not directly involved, saying, "I mainly took care of everything myself." Leigh Anne, who credited her sister's involvement in dual credit English as being an influence on her decision to enroll, said that her parents thought her taking dual credit classes "was the thing to do" but noted that "they didn't really go and meet with anybody at the school." None of the graduates interviewed indicated any direct oral communication between the high schools and parents or between the community college and parents, only communication through papers that were sent home to be signed.

Data from currently enrolled students indicated that parents may be more involved than graduates indicated. Of the ninety-seven students completing the survey, forty-nine (51 percent) responded that their parents were "very involved" in their decision to enroll in dual credit English. One student wrote, "My parents encouraged me to take these [dual credit] classes because they wanted me to be prepared for college and to take some of the load off of me in college." Another student stated, "My parents were very involved. They wanted me to

be in the best class." These comments indicated that parents likely understood the nature of dual credit English and perceived it to be beneficial in preparing their children for college work. Other students responding that their parents were "very involved" did qualify their comments, noting that their parents left the ultimate decision to the students. One student wrote, "My dad wanted me to take dual credit English but he didn't force me." Another student responded, "My parents want me to take the most advanced classes possible," indicating this student's parents had a positive perception of the dual credit English program. However, on a less positive note, one student who indicated that her parents were very involved: "They encouraged me because they thought it would be easier in high school than it would be in college." This statement illustrated a basic misconception regarding dual credit English. The assumption that dual credit courses would be "easier" indicates that even parents who are involved in their children's decisions to take dual credit courses may not have a clear understanding of the programs or the implications of their children's taking such courses.

Besides the forty-nine students who indicated their parents were "very involved," another seventeen students (18 percent) reported that their parents were only "somewhat involved" in the decision-making process. Most of these responses included comments that parents had been "encouraging" but had not forced students to enroll. One student wrote, "I know my mother wanted me to take the class, but she did not push me to take it." Similarly, another student said, "My parents encouraged me to take it, but I made the choice in the end." In terms of responses, it seems that there may have been little real difference between students saying their parents were "very involved" and "somewhat involved."

Unlike these students, however, sixteen students (16 percent) responded that their parents were "not very involved," and fifteen (15 percent) stated that their parents were "not involved at all." Two of the sixteen students wrote, "They [parents] didn't even know about it." Lack of parental knowledge of the program is a possible area of concern for several reasons. To begin with, parents need to be aware that their children are taking college-level courses. On a very practical level, parents should recognize that the courses have college-level expectations that high school students may not be able to meet. Even if students are

intellectually able to do college-level work, they may not necessarily be mature enough to manage the workload or to handle college-level material. If a student is not able to meet the demands of college-level courses, the student not only fails the college course but will also fail senior English, which may prevent him or her from graduating. Because the stakes are so high, both the high school and community college need to do a better job of educating parents about dual credit course offerings.

Placement Procedures

Regardless of how students initially learned about the program, they did not always seem clear on actual placement requirements and procedures. Only one graduate from Rockford High School, Rachel, clearly articulated the procedure, saying: "I had to take a standardized test and get a certain score." Unlike Rachel, most students said they were not sure exactly how it was determined that they could enroll other than the guidance counselor or teacher told them they were eligible. When asked how she first learned about the dual credit English program, Morgan, from Oakfield High School, said:

"Seems like we were given a paper, like if we made such a grade that we had a chance to take the [dual credit English] class." This uncertainty about placement testing may be a result of the large number of achievement tests that students are generally required to take. However, students considering enrollment in the dual credit English program need to have a clear understanding of placement procedures. The community college and participating high schools need to work cooperatively to explain placement testing to students.

Despite efforts to make the policies governing placement testing as fair as possible, these placement tests caused some conflict between high schools and the community college—conflicts that were not related exclusively to dual credit students. Obviously for the high schools, it was disconcerting for the community college to make the determination that students who technically succeeded in passing high school courses were then told that their skills were not adequate to place the students in regular college-level courses. The fact that four-year colleges and universities generally do not require students to complete developmental classes

did not, of course, help the community college's argument. However, full-time community college English faculty believed that the placement testing was generally accurate. Unfortunately, this conflict related to placement procedures may well have influenced what high school students were told or not told about the placement testing for the dual credit English program—even though the initial issue grew from perceived problems with placement of high school graduates and not rising high school seniors.

Dual Credit English Course Assignments and Activities

Beyond researching how graduates and currently enrolled students obtained initial information about the dual credit English program and their level of understanding of placement procedures, I wanted to know what specific types of assignments students completed in the dual credit English courses. According to the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* and according to guidelines governing agreements between Wytheville Community College and the participating high schools, course content is determined by the college. The official course outline for ENG 111 lists as a requirement a minimum of six formal essays and a final exam. Prior to the 1997-98 academic year, seven formal essays and a final exam were required. The ENG 112 approved course outline calls for completion of four essays and a major research paper. These course outlines list other specific course objectives. Interview questions about course content were designed to determine how closely requirements for dual credit courses were paralleling regular college course requirements. Some graduates had completed the dual credit English program up to five years prior to the interviews, so I did not expect these students to remember all assignments or activities; however, I did assume that their recollections could give a general idea of whether or not dual credit English courses were following established guidelines.

Graduates gave a wide range of responses to questions regarding course assignments and requirements. Rockford High School graduates provided examples that most closely paralleled requirements specified in course outlines. While none of the students I interviewed remembered exact numbers of assignments, they identified many of the assignments prescribed

in the course outlines. Students' recollections of the research paper assignments most frequently matched the regular course assignment. Rachel noted that she was required to read *Othello* and *Macbeth* and then "write a term paper comparing some aspects of the plays." These particular works of Shakespeare are not required readings, but both are printed in the required course text and are certainly acceptable works to be covered in these courses. In fact, in most on-campus ENG 112 courses, students read only one of these two Shakespearean works, indicating that students in this particular dual credit English class covered even more material than the students would have if they had taken the course at Wytheville Community College; of course, the dual credit English courses count as both senior English and freshman composition, so in this respect students may be covering more material because scheduling in the high school setting generally allows more contact time than does a regular community college course.

In describing assignments that she remembered, Lisa, also a student from Rockford High School, specifically referred to a term paper assignment that was in keeping with the course outline. In addition to the term paper, Lisa indicated that she would "write a one- to two-page essay every week or so." She noted that these papers were usually about things that had happened in students' lives. She said that she remembered one assignment in which she had to write about someone who had influenced her. She said she also had to write some persuasive essays. Both narrative and argumentative essays are requirements in ENG 111, so again these examples confirmed that this particular section of a dual credit English course was providing a comparable experience to regular ENG 111 and 112 courses.

A third student from Rockford High School, David, stated, "We had to write a lot more [in the dual credit English class than in other classes]." He could not remember the specific number of assignments, but he, too, cited the research paper assignment. He indicated that he was required to do writing throughout ENG 111 and 112. One interesting comment from him that I had not heard from other students from this school was that much of the writing was done in class. He indicated that the teacher "helped us pick a topic and helped us do the outlines." He commented, "We could type it [the writing assignment] on the computer." It was interesting to note that students were doing work in class and using computers because students

in on-campus courses do relatively little in-class writing as a general rule. Generally small numbers of computers in English classrooms and lack of adequate open computer lab hours limit on-campus student access to computers. David also indicated that during the first part of the ENG 111 course he had studied a great deal of grammar and punctuation. This was consistent with what I saw when I went to the classroom to interview the dual credit English teacher; there were notes on the blackboard relating to grammar and punctuation, and I noted stacks of grammar and punctuation quizzes and worksheets on a table in the room. While some instruction in terms of grammar and punctuation is a part of all writing courses, it is not a major component of most regular ENG 111 and 112 courses; again, though, such a focus may be attributed to the senior English component of the program.

Like graduates of Rockford High School, Lincoln High School graduates also provided information to indicate that the dual credit English program was providing experiences comparable to regular course offerings. Jessica said, "I think we read *The Canterbury Tales*. We read it there, and we stayed on it just about the whole semester, just on that one book which is mostly the reading and the reports and just interpreting symbolism and everything." In this case, the choice of literature is appropriate for the course; however, faculty teaching regular ENG 111 and 112 courses generally do not spend an entire semester on one literary work. Extended study of a single text likely limits other types of assignments and activities. Students miss opportunities to discuss other literary works or other genres of writing as prescribed in ENG 112.

In terms of class activities, Jessica indicated students were required to complete a rough draft of each assignment. Students could ask a classmate to proofread the paper, and the students then submitted a final draft which was submitted to the teacher. Keith, also a graduate of Lincoln High School, indicated that students were asked to complete both a rough draft and a final copy of papers and to share much of their writing with other students, though he was not familiar with the term "writing group." The requirement for students to work through multiple drafts of papers is in keeping with course outlines, but more emphasis is placed on peer review in regular courses than is indicated here.

Unlike graduates from these two schools who reported class assignments and activities that were consistent with those on approved course outlines, comments from other graduates indicated that this was not the case at other schools. Leigh Anne, from Middleton High School, described "writing two-page essays on nine segments of *The Story of English* videotapes." At the time of the interview, I was not familiar with *The Story of English*. However, I later learned that this video series was college-level material, and the assignments, albeit shorter in length than assignments generally given in regular ENG 111 and 112 courses, likely made up for length in terms of the number of assignments (nine instead of seven) and in terms of complexity. Leigh Anne went on to note that students also studied literature, specifically referring to *Macbeth*. Leigh Anne also described in detail the method the teacher used for reviewing drafts of writing assignments: "Mr. Hutton would read the draft out in front of the class, and they would like critique it, and you would have to sit with a picce of paper. You had to number each line in the papers, and then Mr. Hutton would say, 'In line 15, you have a verb tense that is wrong' or whatever." Even though the use of peer review of student writing is consistent with pedagogical methodology used by most full-time community college English faculty, the situation Leigh Anne described seemed to be a superficial kind of peer review in which ultimately the teacher identified errors, perhaps even humiliating students in the process. Leigh Anne's description of the activity gave no indication that other students were actually participating. In this regard it seems that there needs to be a better means of evaluating assignments and activities that are part of the dual credit English program.

Another graduate's comments also identified a program concern. When asked to describe types of assignments or class activities from her dual credit English courses, Morgan, a student from Oakfield High School, said, "One thing I remember is the spelling tests. We always had a spelling test, like every Monday or something like that." Spelling tests are not a prescribed component of dual credit English courses, though they may well be a requirement for senior English and therefore appropriate. Nonetheless, it was a bit disconcerting that spelling tests were the first and main recollection the student had of dual credit English. A sound dual

credit English program requires full integration of components of both senior English and college English if the program is to provide a coherent learning experience.

Morgan went on to say that class activities included discussing homework and "watching movies for the literature part." She did note writing some essays but could give no specific examples. The use of videos for teaching literature may be acceptable as long as videos are supplementing—not replacing—study of literary texts. Again, evaluation and assessment mechanisms need to be in place to ensure course assignments and activities are appropriate.

Such an evaluation method would likely have brought to light perhaps the most serious problem identified by dual credit English graduates from Parkdale High School. Sarah, a 1994 graduate, said that she honestly could not remember any assignment or activity she did in dual credit English. Tiffany, a 1995 graduate, indicated that she wrote some papers, "probably three or four," during both semesters of dual credit English instead of the required twelve; she could not remember any other assignments or activities. Another 1995 graduate, Chad, reported overall satisfaction with the course, but the actual examples he gave me of his experience in the course were inconsistent with this statement. In fact, he said that when he took the class, "the average class was spent with the teacher explaining assignments that some students had not done." He said that students usually did not do the assigned reading, so the teacher would "spend the class time going over the assignment and explaining it in detail." Even though he apparently perceived this as an acceptable use of time (perhaps the teacher taking time to explain), it actually indicated poor teaching. In terms of numbers of assignments, he noted that he had written three papers—a narrative essay, a descriptive essay, and a term paper. Apparently these were the only assignments for both ENG 111 and 112, again obviously not meeting established course requirements. Granted, he might not have remembered all assignments, but if, in fact, the total was only three, this definitely violated course requirements, particularly considering that the essays were assignments in ENG 111 and the term paper in ENG 112.

Even more serious than reports of students completing only three or four essay assignments was Kimberly's revelation that she wrote no major papers, "only a couple of poems and a few stream of consciousness journal entries," in both ENG 111 and 112. Stories from these graduates were most startling because clearly course goals and objectives were not being met. The fact that this problem was not identified and recurred over at least a four-year period illustrated grievous administrative failure and a complete lack of program evaluation. At the time of the interviews with these graduates, the dual credit teacher had resigned the previous year, and another faculty member had taken over the course. The new teacher was the one graduate had pointed to as having taught them needed skills during their sophomore or junior years of high school. Nonetheless, the situation with the teacher prior to her retirement should never have occurred. Closer scrutiny of dual credit faculty, perhaps through more thorough evaluation, was clearly warranted.

All of the comments from graduates regarding assignments and class activities were anecdotal, and, as noted previously, in some cases, because several years had elapsed since the students took the courses, they indicated they were not able to remember specific types of assignments. Documentation that faculty were following prescribed course curricula should have been a regular part of faculty and program evaluation, but it was not clear from available data that this was the case. Again, data from graduates were self-reported, and it was not possible to determine exactly how valuable such assignments were, particularly in the context of later college and work experiences. To ensure that assignments and activities are, in fact, meeting course requirements and expectations, policies or assessment procedures should be in place to validate such information, perhaps through the use of portfolios.

Data obtained from the two focus group sessions confirmed findings from graduate interviews and the current student survey. Students from both Pineville High School and Oakfield High School reported having completed all of the required major writing assignments listed on the approved course outlines. Discussion initially focused predominantly on the research paper assignment, but this was not surprising considering the focus group sessions both occurred at the end of the academic year when students were just completing ENG 112.

their own writing rather than through use of texts, worksheets, or quizzes and tests. This is the preferred methodology used by most full-time faculty, so it was encouraging to learn that at least this particular dual credit English faculty was employing this methodology too.

In regard to quizzes and tests, students did note that they often took quizzes on reading assignments. "That's to make sure we've read the stories," said one student. Again, full-time community college faculty frequently use such quizzes, thus indicating a close parallel to "regular" ENG 111 and 112 experiences.

Students participating in the focus group session at Oakfield High School reported having completed all of the required major writing assignments in dual credit English. When asked to comment on types of class activities, like the students from the Pineville High School focus group, they reported doing a great deal of class discussion. Using the exact words as one of the students from Pineville, an Oakfield High School student said: "We discuss everything." Another student added, "We would read something and then discuss it." Again, it was not surprising that students were quick to recall discussions involving literature since they were just finishing ENG 112, a literature-based course. In terms of papers they had written, one student commented, "We wrote thousands of papers!" Another student interjected, "It was good but very, very bad." When asked to elaborate, the student said, "It minimized our plagiarism. She [Ms. Graham] looks at them [papers]. We have to document everything exactly right. This has to be our stuff. She checks everything." Another student noted, "She knows when it's not us writing." It was clear from these comments that the dual credit teacher was carefully monitoring student work and requiring an adequate number of assignments to ensure that she knew each student's writing style. Besides commenting on the research assignments, many students also remembered narrative, cause-effect, and descriptive essay assignments, indicating that they had been exposed to different rhetorical modes.

In relation to management of the writing process, Oakfield High School students reported that they had completed rough drafts of assignments prior to submitting final drafts. One student noted, "She [Ms. Graham] tries to help us keep from procrastinating; she breaks

down assignments, like the day when our rough draft is due and our 'works cited.' We don't wait until the last minute to do it." This format is similar to the way most full-time faculty teach the writing process, illustrating that this particular teacher's pedagogy is in line with pedagogy of "regular" sections of ENG 111 and 112.

When asked about instruction in grammar and punctuation, Oakfield High School students indicated they had done more such work from texts than students in the Pineville High School focus group. They noted that their teacher had asked them to purchase a separate grammar handbook that they really liked. When asked if this text had been used by itself or with other required college texts, students indicated it had supplemented the required text. There was no problem with providing supplemental texts as long as required texts were not being replaced. Interestingly, during the focus group, one student noted that she believed students at neighboring Middleton High School were using only the regular senior English text. This seemed to be a bone of contention among students because several students complained about the cost of the texts for dual credit English. I had assumed the school system purchased texts for students, as did most of the participating high schools, but further questioning confirmed that the Oakfield did not provide texts. Not only were students required to pay for their own books, but they also had to travel to the college's main campus to purchase these texts. One student noted that Ms. Graham had picked up books for some students who had not been able to go to campus, but most students indicated they had made the trip to campus. The fact that students were required to purchase their own texts was allowable under dual credit articulation agreements, but it seemed unusual that one of the two schools in the same district was avoiding such an expense by using only senior English texts. At this point, I realized this was likely one of the "exceptions" the division chair had mentioned regarding textbook selection. However, he had indicated that the exception had involved the teacher using an earlier edition of a college-selected text, not that the teacher was being allowed to use a senior English text. This information was forwarded to the new division chair with a recommendation that the college review the "exception" granted to this particular dual credit faculty member to ensure that course comparability is being maintained.

Confirming data collected from graduates and students participating in focus groups, currently enrolled students who completed the survey reported doing many of the same types of assignments and class activities as those usually associated with "regular" sections of ENG 111 and 112. The majority of students responding listed at least some type of writing activity, whether it be a reference to simply "writing" (sixty-eight students or 69 percent); "in-class writing activities" (twenty-two students or 23 percent); or "research paper" assignment (eleven students or 11 percent). References to writing assignments often included mention of "peer editing activities" (thirteen or 13 percent). Of the ninety-seven students completing the survey, seventy-four (75 percent) noted doing at least some type of "class discussion"; some students provided more details regarding these activities, the most common being discussions of literature. Twenty-five students (26 percent) referred to "group work" as a regular class activity, but it was not always clear exactly what this included. It is possible students classified discussions as "group work," and they may have also considered peer editing activities as "group work" since many of the other students in each respective class gave such examples. Most of the students from one particular school system reported writing weekly logs that were required to be at least 250 words in length. All of these types of assignments mirror those routinely used by full-time faculty in "regular" sections of ENG 111 and 112, thus providing supportive evidence of comparable quality between dual credit English courses and "regular" course sections. Only three students (3 percent) reported watching videos; this was a particularly positive finding since full-time faculty had expressed some concern that courses taught in the high school setting might be relying too heavily on the use of videos (fearing videos were replacing reading of literary texts). Relatively few students (nine or 9 percent) indicated they took tests or quizzes, and of those nine students, three specifically noted taking "essay tests." This is also in keeping with practices in "regular" course sections. Five students (5 percent) did refer to doing "vocabulary" work, likely a component of senior English that would be appropriate. Even though students self-reported data for the survey, the similarity of responses from students attending the same high schools indicated data were valid.

Preparation for Subsequent College-Level and Career Writing

Despite problems reported from Parkdale High School, the majority of graduates indicated that they believed the dual credit English courses had prepared them well for subsequent college-level and career writing. This was a unanimous comment from all graduates interviewed from Lincoln High School, Rockford High School, Pineville High School, Woodland High School, Oakfield High School, and Middleton High School.

Jessica, a Lincoln High School graduate, indicated she was satisfied with her preparation for college. She said, "It's helped a whole lot. To put it bluntly, as rough as Ms. Price was on the papers, it helped extremely, instead of just going straight into college just from the high school level." Jessica reported earning a B in ENG 111 and a C in ENG 112. She also went on to say that some students got really upset by the rigorous grading in the courses but noted that the teacher did not give in to complaints and maintained the rigorous scale. It was encouraging to hear that this particular dual credit teacher was committed to maintaining college-level standards.

When asked to comment on her level of preparation, Rachel, a graduate of Rockford High School, said, "I think it [dual credit English] prepared me very well. It taught me how to write well under pressure and off the top of my head." She went on to say, "There has not been anything new introduced to me here [Appalachian State University] in terms of writing that I didn't know from that class [dual credit English]." Rachel's response indicated that the course had adequately prepared her for required writing at a four-year university. Likewise, Lisa, also a graduate of Rockford High School, reported being well prepared. When asked to explain what she meant when she said that she was "well prepared" for subsequent courses, Lisa said: "We learned the basics of writing that I have needed to know [at a four-year university]." She defined "basics" as what she had learned about "paragraphing, writing the body of a paper, and how to write closings." All of these are components of ENG 111 and 112, confirming that this particular dual credit English faculty member who had taught Rachel and Lisa was also following approved course outlines.

One graduate of dual credit English from Pineville High School had attended the University of Virginia. When asked how well she thought the dual credit English course prepared her for her college experience there, Marsha wrote: "I was able to test out of a mandatory writing class this spring (a class that only two to four people are allowed to test out of per semester) largely because of the grammatical and transitional rules and techniques I learned in Ms. Burton's class." This report indicated the Pineville High School dual credit English program was likely of high quality since the University of Virginia accepts dual credit English courses only for elective credit.

In commenting on how well her dual credit English experience at Woodland High School had prepared her for other college-level writing, Cindy said she thought the dual credit English courses "helped a lot." She reported earning A's on all her writing assignments, particularly those in criminology. She said the criminology instructor "always comments that he likes the way I write." Of course, a teacher's "liking" the way a student writes does not necessary ensure quality writing, but at least from Stephanie's perspective, the course had prepared her to succeed in subsequent courses.

In addition to positive responses from graduates of Woodland High School, graduates from Oakfield High School and Middleton High School also offered positive comments regarding their dual credit English experiences. When asked how well she thought the dual credit courses prepared her, Morgan said, "I think it helped a lot because now I'm in literature [ENG 241], and we have to write essays every now and then, so that helped as practice." In commenting on grades she received in courses that required at least some degree of writing at Wytheville Community College, Morgan reported making A's and B's which paralleled the grades that she earned in dual credit English courses.

Leigh Anne, from Middleton High School (which is in the same county as Oakfield High School), said that she believed dual credit English prepared her well for college-level writing: "It helped a lot because I'll be writing a paper and think, well Mr. Hutton said not to do that, so I can't do that." She went on to say that she had been required to write several papers in history

class at Wytheville Community College and said that her friends from high school who had not completed dual credit English "didn't do as well on the history essays as I did." When asked if she would recommend that other students take dual credit English courses, Leigh Anne said:

> I'd say definitely take it [dual credit English] because it really prepares you in writing essays. Plus my teacher did a lot of plays. Mr. Hutton did *Macbeth*, and I really know *Macbeth*. But the teacher I had before that, in eleventh grade, did *Julius Caesar*, and I mean I know the general plot. But I don't know details and stuff like that. Mr. Hutton was really, really good. He is a really good teacher.

It was clear from Leigh Anne's comments that she believed Hutton was an excellent teacher, but her specific comments regarding what she learned also indicated that her experiences in dual credit English did prepare her to succeed when she became a full-time Wytheville Community College student.

However, as expected based on previous data from other graduates, only one student from Parkdale High School indicated satisfaction. Most of these students indicated that the course was "a waste of time," noting that if it had not been for very positive experiences from a tenth and eleventh grade teacher, they would not have been prepared at all for subsequent college-level work. Kimberly said: "I was not prepared at all." When asked to elaborate, she said that the teacher was a nice person, but "we didn't do anything." Complaints from all Parkdale High School graduates were directed specifically toward one dual credit teacher.

In all of these cases except those noted from Parkdale High School, it was encouraging that graduates reported positive experiences from their dual credit English classes. At the same time, graduate responses tended to provide more commentary on the quality of individual teachers than on the quality of the program itself. Also, the fact that the situation that occurred at Parkdale High School went undetected indicates that dual credit English teachers have a tremendous amount of autonomy that apparently has not generally been monitored. Again,

enhanced program evaluation should be used to determine if dual credit faculty—and for that matter faculty teaching regular sections of ENG 111 and 112—are following approved curricula and using appropriate grading scales.

Like graduates, all Pineville High School and Oakfield High School students who participated in the focus group said they would recommend the dual credit classes to other students. "It's a great class," said one student from Pineville. "You work hard, but it's worth it." Other students also indicated that they believed their experiences in dual credit English had prepared them well for the writing they anticipated they would have when they enrolled as full-time college students.

Also, currently enrolled students believed dual credit English was preparing them for college-level and career writing. Results of the survey of ninety-seven currently enrolled students found that seventy-five (77 percent) listed the overall preparation for college-level or career writing as an advantage of taking dual credit English. Fourteen students (15 percent) also provided additional comments indicating they believed they had learned more in dual credit English than they had in other English courses or than they believed they would have learned in regular senior English. Many recognized that they were required to do more writing but believed this had helped them learn more.

As noted, graduate data and survey data regarding how effectively dual credit English had prepared students for subsequent writing were valuable but somewhat limited because they were self-reported. Thus, I attempted to verify student success through grade analysis (see Appendix K). Of the 445 students I tracked, the majority, 265 or 60 percent, earned the same or higher grades in subsequent writing intensive courses, indicating that the courses had prepared students for subsequent college-level writing at Wytheville Community College. More specifically, sixty-seven (15 percent) earned the same grade(s) in all subsequent courses. Sixty-five students (15 percent) earned grades that were all higher than those they received in dual credit English. One hundred thirty-three students (30 percent) earned the same or better grades; seventy-five students (17 percent) earned some grades that were higher and some that

were lower than those they received in dual credit English. Only seventy-six students (17 percent) earned the same or lower grades, and only twenty-nine students (6 percent) earned grades that were all lower than the grades they earned in dual credit English classes. The eleven-year time period is such that subsequent courses would have been taught by a variety of different teachers, likely using a variety of different pedagogical methodologies, further validating the success of the program. It is recommended that program assessment be revised to include on-going tracking of dual credit English graduate grades.

Comparison to Senior English

Because dual credit courses are generally taught in the high school setting, one concern is that the courses will be taught basically the same as the senior English course. However, most graduates indicated that the dual credit English courses were different from regular senior English. Keith, from Lincoln High School, said that the senior English class "seemed, for one thing, to go a lot more by the book than we [dual credit English students] did. I think they had a lot more reading, whereas we had a lot more on the writing side." Similarly, Leigh Anne, from Middleton High School, noted that seniors not enrolled in dual credit English did less writing: "The other class, the normal class, they had to write questions, make up questions from the episodes of *The Story of English* they saw, but we [dual credit English students] had to write essays on every episode." Like Keith and Leigh Anne, most graduates indicated that the dual credit English courses were more writing intensive than regular senior English courses, indicating there is a desired distinction between the two. Survey data confirmed graduate responses, with the majority of currently enrolled students providing positive comments regarding the comparison between dual credit English and senior English. Twenty-seven of the ninety-seven students (28 percent) indicated dual credit was "more challenging" and fourteen (15 percent) stated they believed they had "learned more" in dual credit than they had learned in previous English courses or than they believed they would have in senior English. One student wrote: "It is far, far, far above the other classes I have ever had." Other comments from students indicated that dual credit English was "harder" than other English courses (as noted by twenty-five of ninety-seven students or 26 percent) and required "more writing" (as noted by twenty-

one students or 22 percent). The overall positive comments regarding dual credit English indicated that students perceived ENG 111 and 112 to be advanced classes rather than simply a regular senior English course.

Subsequent College-Level Writing

In addition to asking students to compare dual credit English to what they knew about senior English, I asked students to comment on the amount of writing they were finding that was required when they reached the college level. Rachel said that she had not had to do very much writing in courses she took at Appalachian State University. She had written a paper "about every other week in my psychology course" and had done "a couple of projects that included writing a paper," but she did not specify what course carried this requirement. She said that "in some classes I have had to take calculations and data and write about that." She said she had also kept two journals and had written one to two pages weekly in the journals. She went on to say that she probably wrote ten to twelve papers on average each semester. After hearing this list of assignments, I was able to determine that I needed to listen carefully to responses concerning "amounts of writing" because terms were very relative. What she considered to be "not very much" may, in fact, have been a great deal of writing by other standards.

It was interesting to note that some students reported doing more writing in the dual credit English course than in other college-level courses. Lynn, a graduate of Rockford County High School who was a junior at Virginia Tech at the time of the interview, said: "Compared to my classes now, I did more writing in dual credit English. We wrote all the time." Other than "a writing intensive management/marketing class that had all essay tests," she said she had done little writing.

When asked if she had been required to do much writing in college, Sarah, a graduate of Parkdale High School who was a senior at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, immediately said, "Oh yes," and went on to describe keeping "a reflective journal on my student teaching," as well as writing five or six major papers per semester. Tiffany, also from Parkdale High School, was enrolled at Roanoke College and indicated that she had to write "at least three

major papers" in one English course at Roanoke College. She said, "I have at least five major writing assignments on average each semester," indicating she was doing quite a bit of writing.

The students' reports of successfully completing a substantial amount of writing in subsequent college courses helped validate that the dual credit English courses these students completed had been quality courses. However, as noted earlier, students' self-reporting of amounts of writing may not always be completely accurate because perceptions of what constituted "a great deal of writing" were subjective. Additional research, perhaps including a review of actual writing samples, would likely provide more conclusive proof of the quality of the program.

Because students who were currently enrolled in high school completed the survey, obviously no comparable data were available regarding experiences with subsequent writing.

Smaller Class Sizes

Aside from the general consensus that the dual credit English program was preparing most students for the writing tasks they were facing in college, students also reported other benefits of the program. Keith, a Lincoln High School graduate, noted that students' receiving individualized attention was another benefit of dual credit English. He said that if students waited and took the class at a four-year college or university, "you would have problems with larger classes whereas at a high school or here at Wytheville Community College there's a lot more one-on-one interaction." Similarly, Rachel, a Rockford High School graduate, noted, "I think the dual credit English class in high school was at least comparable, if not better than the English that is offered at Appalachian State University because I think I got more individual attention." All of the ENG 111 and 112 courses offered through Wytheville Community College, including dual credit English courses, have enrollment caps of twenty-five students. It is very rare that exceptions are made to exceed that cap. In many cases the enrollments in dual credit English courses are significantly lower than that, with the average number of students enrolled in a course at Middleton being only ten or twelve. Even at Lincoln High School, the largest participating school system, arrangements have been made to offer multiple sections of

the dual credit English courses with average enrollments of sixteen to twenty rather than a single larger section.

Time- and Cost-saving Features

Besides the advantage of smaller class sizes, students repeatedly cited saving time and money as major benefits. David said, "I'd tell other students taking dual credit courses would be a good idea because one thing is that it's free and you don't have to pay for it when you do go to college." Information obtained from the survey of currently enrolled students confirmed data from graduates. Thirteen of the ninety-seven students responding to the survey (13 percent) identified the cost saving as an advantage of taking dual credit English.

Morgan noted that having dual credit classes meant that she would "spread out my classes a little better when I got to college because this semester I have nine credits, where first semester I had eighteen." The ability "to spread out classes" allows students to spend more time per course, thus increasing the opportunities for students to learn more and earn better grades. Instead of opting to spread out classes when they attend college, other students prefer to work at completing college programs more quickly. Twenty-eight of the ninety-seven students (30 percent) responding to the survey listed the "time-saving" feature of the program as a benefit. Twenty-one students (22 percent) noted "earning college credit" as a benefit, a comment which may be related to both the time-saving and cost-saving benefits of dual credit.

Comments from other graduates echoed these sentiments, indicating that the cost-saving and time-saving features of dual credit courses clearly contribute to the popularity of the dual credit English program. Therefore, it is critical that program administrators at both the community college and high school levels work together to ensure that the dual credit English courses are high quality and do, in fact, adequately prepare students for subsequent college-level and career writing.

Classroom Interruptions in the High School Setting

Despite the overall positive feedback from both graduates and currently enrolled students, one particular concern related to teaching dual credit English in the high school setting focuses on the perception that high school classes tend to be interrupted frequently by high school activities such as pep rallies, assemblies, or club meetings. Such interruptions do not generally occur on a college campus. As noted in Chapter 3, the issue of interruptions may affect the transferability of dual credit English courses to other four-year colleges and universities. Therefore, during the interviews I conducted, I asked graduates to comment on the frequency of interruptions to their dual credit English courses. Rachel, a student from Rockford High School, responded to the question of how often the dual credit English courses she took were interrupted by saying: "Very rarely." She went on to say that the classes were scheduled during the middle of the day, so they were not interrupted often because they were close to the lunch break and therefore could not be interrupted. David also verified this situation by saying: "They'll put the class in third block because that's lunch time, and usually they don't interrupt anything during lunch." Leigh Anne, from Middleton High School, said her dual credit English class was only interrupted twice during the year. She noted that this high school was really small and there were not a lot of clubs, so classes were not often interrupted.

Keith, a graduate of Lincoln High School, said, "Well I had it for third block, and usually for right in there, there weren't very many interruptions. I think maybe the whole year for both 111 and 112 it was interrupted maybe four or five times for something big. So it wasn't real bad." Keith also noted that third block was near lunch time, thus accounting for the minimal interruptions. In terms of things he considered "big," Keith responded, "Usually the few times that it was interrupted was mostly for the guidance people and things like that. They usually pulled people out of either English or government classes because those were required for everyone." When asked if these meetings were to work with scheduling, Keith said it was "to talk about college usually."

Unfortunately, interruptions were more frequent at other schools. Initially Morgan reported that interruptions were not frequent but then went on to say, "It might have been once every three or four weeks." Jessica reported that the dual credit English courses at Lincoln High School were not interrupted very often either, but then went on to say, "But the bad thing was when it did get interrupted, like for National Honor Society, all of us [the students] went out. You might as well just quit the class because there wasn't anybody to teach." When asked how frequently such interruptions occurred, she said, "Maybe once a month." Even though once-a-month interruptions are not necessarily considered "frequent," it is unlikely than there would be this many interruptions during a "regular" on-campus section of ENG 111 or 112.

Again, understanding that many graduates might have completed the dual credit courses several years ago and, therefore, might not have clear memory of the number of interruptions, I also asked currently enrolled students to comment on interruptions. Nineteen of ninety-seven students (20 percent) responding to the survey listed "snow" or "weather" as a reason that their dual credit English course was interrupted. Obviously this was an "interruption," but it was not the type of expected response, nor did it equate to the kind of interruption that was at issue. Such missed days of instruction would have been made up, with little, if any, instructional time lost. Twenty students (21 percent) did report class interruptions due to "school activities or functions"; these included such things as "assemblies," "concerts," or "plays." Only one student listed a "pep rally" as an example of an interruption. Four students did note classes were interrupted when "school pictures" were taken. Only two students listed club-related activities as causing a disruption to class schedules. Surprisingly, thirteen students (13 percent) reported interruptions for "senior announcements"; of these, eight were reported from a single high school where students noted there was not a home room time scheduled to allow for such announcements. Six students listed "bomb threats" as interruptions to class time, but obviously these were unavoidable and could also occur on college campuses.

The issue of class interruptions may not be a major concern in terms of course comparability to "regular" sections of ENG 111 and 112 because the number of contact hours for students taking these dual credit courses in the high school setting exceeds the number of

contact hours for "regular" course sections. Also, high schools have compulsory attendance policies that help ensure students are in class. Not all college classes do. Nonetheless, based on data regarding interruptions, both high school and community college administrators need to work together to see that interruptions of dual credit classes are kept to a minimum, perhaps through the mid-day scheduling that some schools are using.

Overall Transfer Issues

Most graduates who had already transferred to a four-year college or university reported no problems with receiving institutions accepting credits for dual credit English courses. This was true even with the student who had transferred out of state to a college in North Carolina.

Despite overall reports of successful transfer of dual credit English courses, Kimberly, who transferred to William and Mary, noted an unexpected transfer problem.

She said, "The dual credit fulfilled the requirement for the program, but I didn't know that at the time." She said, "Nobody told me that it would transfer." It was unclear whether this was an administrative error or if the student simply misunderstood the transfer issue. A similar problem occurred with another student from the same high school. Sarah, who transferred to Randolph-Macon Woman's College, said that she was told that the dual credit English classes did not show up on her high school transcript, so she was required to take equivalent courses at Randolph-Macon. This situation indicates that administrators at both the community college and high school levels need to see that students realize they must request that transcripts be sent from Wytheville Community College to transfer institutions to receive the college credit.

Confusing Dual Credit and Advanced Placement Courses

One unexpected finding in interviews with dual credit English graduates was that some students seem to confuse dual credit English with Advanced Placement English. This was evident at Rockford High School and Middleton High School. While the student from

Rockford High School used the incorrect term only twice during the interview, one of the graduates from Middleton High School repeatedly referred to the class as being AP [Advanced Placement] rather than "dual credit." She also noted that at the beginning of the semester the teacher had told the class that students would have to pass a test at the end of the course to earn college credit. She mentioned that the teacher had shared sample essays of what students would be expected to write. This, she said, had really scared the students. However, at some point later in the semester, the teacher had told students that they would not have to take a test. This incident, though admittedly isolated, indicated that dual credit faculty need to be clear on the distinction between the two types of courses.

Recommendations from Students and Graduates

When asked if they had recommendations for program improvements, most graduates could not think of any, implying that the program was serving the needs of the students and adequately preparing them for subsequent college-level and career writing. However, some students did make recommendations. One student who had enrolled at Wytheville Community College noted that she had been advised to wait until her sophomore year to take literature courses. She said she would have preferred to take the literature courses the first year she was in college rather than wait. Her rationale was that she did not want too much time to elapse after taking the dual credit English classes. Leigh Anne echoed these sentiments, saying: "When you get here [Wytheville Community College], we have a year without English. Well, you could take ENG 241 if you wanted to, but I waited a year. It kind of gets you out of the practice a little bit." This was an issue I had not considered. Technically students could have enrolled in the literature courses during their freshman year because they had completed the necessary prerequisite courses; therefore, high school faculty or counselors and/or advisors at Wytheville Community College need to make students aware of their options when students register for subsequent English courses.

At the same time, David reported that he was allowed to enroll in a sophomore-level class and pointed out that he was the youngest student enrolled. While he was not intimidated

by being the youngest in the class, this may be an issue for other students and again becomes an issue about which dual credit graduates should be advised.

Lynn, a student from Rockford High School, offered another recommendation for program improvement. She reported having to do quite a bit of writing in dual credit English but recommended that students be required to do even more. She also thought that more time should be devoted to working in peer writing groups. Rachel, who successfully transferred her dual credit English credits to Appalachian State University, also recommended that dual credit English teachers continue to "make students work very hard."

While most of the recommendations from students focused on overall program issues, one student voiced particular concern about a classroom issue. Keith said:

> I thought it was a fairly good program. Probably the only complaint that I had with it was the fact that we didn't have a lot of, I guess, leeway about what we wanted to write. It was a lot of, pretty much you had to write this kind of paper and a lot of the way it was done was that we were given a topic or some pretty straight guidelines about what we had to write. And just the way that I like to write I'd like a little more freedom. But other than that, I thought it was a good class.

In most of the courses taught by full-time community college faculty, students do have at least some degree of flexibility in choosing topics for many writing assignments; granted there may be some restrictions. It is unclear from this response whether the teacher is being perhaps too restrictive or whether the student wants and expects free reign of topics which might not necessarily fit the parameters of the course. Better program oversight and evaluation would likely eliminate such problems.

As noted earlier in this chapter, Kimberly, from Parkdale High School, who indicated that she wrote only two poems and did some stream of consciousness writing in the course,

commented: "You could do anything, and it would be an improvement over what I took." Two other graduates I interviewed from this school shared Kimberly's sentiments. None of the graduates completed the course during the same year, indicating that this was not an isolated situation that affected only one group of students. The fact that this situation occurred identifies a serious administrative problem that must be corrected.

Conclusions

Overall interviews with the purposive sample of graduates and surveys and focus groups sessions with currently enrolled students indicated students were generally satisfied with the dual credit English program. Students from all except one of the seven participating high schools reported high satisfaction with the program. Students identified constituencies who provided program information and influenced their decisions to enroll in dual credit English, including the degree to which their parents were involved. They also discussed program placement policies and procedures.

Beyond commenting on the administrative aspects of the program, student provided valuable anecdotal data regarding dual credit English course assignments and activities. Most recounted experiences that were essentially parallel to those occurring in "regular" sections of ENG 111 and 112, as evidenced by the types and numbers of assignments and the use of similar pedagogical approaches. It appeared that most of the dual credit English faculty were adhering to approved course curricula. The instances in which students described situations of non-compliance with course objectives appeared to be isolated and linked to specific teachers.

Most graduates believed dual credit English courses had adequately prepared them for subsequent college and career writing. When asked how dual credit English compared to what they had heard about senior English, most students noted clear differences, indicating that dual credit English was, in fact, a distinct course and not simply a modified version of senior English.

Amid predominantly positive program feedback, students did point out some concerns beyond those tied directly to particular faculty. Such concerns focused on issues related to dual credit English being taught in the high school setting and uncertainty about course transferability.

Overall, graduate and student perceptions were very positive. Students like being able to earn college credit, often at no personal monetary cost, while still being enrolled in high school. These positive views of the program undoubtedly contribute to the popularity of dual credit courses.

CHAPTER 6

PROGRAM REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dual Credit English Program Benefits and Successes

The dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College has experienced tremendous growth since its implementation in 1988. Beginning with offerings at only three high schools, the program has since grown to include all except two of the nine high schools in the college's service region. To date, more than 1,250 different students have enrolled in various sections of dual credit English. Of those, 445 have subsequently enrolled in additional courses at Wytheville Community College, with 116 of those earning a certificate or degree. It is impossible to determine whether or not dual credit English played a direct role in students' decisions to continue their education at Wytheville Community College, but it seems safe to assume that success in a college course at least helped these students recognize their ability to do college-level work.

Interviews with various constituencies involved in the dual credit English program identified several positive aspects of the program. In keeping with the rationale for establishing a dual credit program in Virginia, the dual credit English program has succeeded in its intended goal of providing advanced-level courses to qualified high school seniors. Data from graduates and currently enrolled dual credit students confirm that many high school seniors value the opportunity to undertake academically challenging courses. The cost-saving and time-saving features of the dual credit program serve as added incentives for student participation. Some students are able to complete as much as an entire year of college credit while still attending high school, depending on the types of dual credit offerings available at the students' respective high schools. Even those students who complete only dual credit English courses appreciate being that far ahead when they enroll as full-time college students. Articulation agreements between Wytheville Community College and other institutions of higher education are such that students generally experience no problems in transferring credits to most state-supported four-year

colleges and universities, and even some private and out-of-state institutions also accept credit for such courses.

Students are not the only benefactors of dual credit. The dual credit program has strengthened communication between local high schools and Wytheville Community College. Because the program is mutually beneficial, both educational institutions have incentives to work cooperatively. This is not to suggest that the agencies did not work together prior to implementation of the dual credit program; it is simply to note that the dual credit arrangement has promoted continued cooperation among these institutions. High school administrators see the program as enhancing high school curricula and expanding opportunities for students. College administrators like being able to provide such opportunities and also see the program as being an effective tool for recruiting students to become full-time community college students. In a geographic area where many students come from families in which no one has attended college, this type of program has proved particularly useful in helping students recognize their academic abilities and introducing them to the college. In addition to these advantages for students, both community colleges and public schools benefit financially from dual credit programs, not just the English program. The state provides FTES funding to community colleges, as well ADM funding to participating high schools. In this regard, the program is obviously beneficial for both institutions and for parents and students who generally do not have to bear tuition costs. Currently, all of the high schools participating in Wytheville Community College's dual credit program pay tuition costs for their students who take dual credit courses.

Interviews, focus group sessions, and survey data found that the majority of students who have completed the dual credit English program have been pleased with their experiences. Most believe the courses have prepared them well for subsequent college and career writing, and most students expressed overall satisfaction with the program. Grade analysis, comparing students' grades earned in dual credit English with grades earned in later writing-intensive courses, verified student perceptions of levels of preparation, with most students earning the same or better grades in subsequent courses at Wytheville Community College.

Faculty Selection and Credentialing

Based on research findings, there are several particularly strong components of the dual credit English program. To begin with, Wytheville Community College, in cooperation with participating high schools, is committed to requiring that all dual credit English faculty be properly credentialed according to accreditation guidelines. All faculty who have taught dual credit English courses from 1988 to the present have been fully credentialed, holding a master's degree with a minimum eighteen credit hours in the teaching field. Wytheville Community College recognizes that failure to comply with such guidelines would not only jeopardize the institutional accreditation but also compromise program quality.

Class Sizes

In addition to this commitment to faculty selection, the college and high schools have also maintained reasonable class sizes for sections of dual credit English. In most all instances, the enrollment cap of twenty-five students in sections of dual credit English has been met. The only exceptions occurred three or four times when twenty-seven students were allowed to enroll in a single course section. Even at the largest participating high school, arrangements have consistently been made to offer multiple sections of dual credit English instead of exceeding enrollment caps. Both community college and high school administrators and staff recognize the need to maintain these enrollment ceilings. In some situations, course enrollments have been significantly lower than in "regular" course sections.

Placement Procedures

Another program aspect that is generally strong involves adherence to accepted placement procedures, an issue that is critical in terms of course comparability. Wytheville Community College has clear placement policies that apply to all incoming students, including dual credit English students. Students wishing to enroll in dual credit English courses are allowed to take college placement tests at no cost. Community college counselors actually visit each participating high school and administer placement tests on site. It is not unusual for

counselors to schedule more than one visit to accommodate as many students as possible. Even if students do miss on-site testing opportunities, these students are allowed to come to the college's main campus to take placement tests. Students also have the option of taking these tests at either of the college's education centers (the Galax Education Center or the Smyth County Education Center). College counselors are also available to discuss dual credit offerings with students, as are high school guidance counselors.

For the most part, academic records of dual credit English students showed that students were required to meet the same placement criteria as all other community college students. This meant that most students seeking to enroll in dual credit English were required to take the college's placement test and, with relatively few exceptions, only those students who successfully met placement criteria were allowed to enroll. Grade analysis of the 445 dual credit English students who continued their studies at Wytheville Community College found that all except four had met the placement criteria. These students should have been required to complete a developmental writing course prior to enrolling in dual credit English. It was not clear exactly why these students were allowed to enroll; it is possible that it was an administrative error or oversight. However, as noted in Chapter 3, one high school principal did admit to "slipping in students" who had not met placement criteria. He did not elaborate on his methodology for "slipping" these students into the courses, so there was no way to determine how many students this involved. College administrators were made aware of his violation of the policy as soon as that information was available in 1997, and these administrators indicated steps were taken to eliminate this blatant policy violation. Research produced no additional evidence that similar situations were occurring at any of the other participating high schools.

Adherence to Approved Course Curricula

Beyond placement issues, data collected from graduates and currently enrolled students, as well as from interviews with dual credit English faculty, provided evidence indicating most faculty were adhering to approved course curricula. Anecdotal information from students also suggested that faculty were using teaching methodologies similar to those used by full-time

community college English faculty. Such information was positive in the sense that it indicated students in dual credit English were receiving similar types of instructional experiences as students in "regular" English courses. However, as noted in Chapter 5, because information is anecdotal, it does not prove course comparability, and a related recommendation will be made later in this chapter.

Identified Program Concerns and Recommendations

Even though research found a high level of satisfaction with the dual credit English program among most constituencies, it was also apparent that there are areas of concern that need to be addressed. Some of the following recommendations are minor, but others are more significant.

Student and Parental Understanding of Dual Credit Programs

Despite attempts to make placement testing as simple as possible, research indicated that not all students clearly understand the process. Several graduates remembered taking "some sort of test," but they did not seem to understand exactly how the test determined their placement in or exclusion from dual credit English courses. Some graduates indicated they were asked to take so many different tests during their senior year that they were not always sure as to the nature of each test. It is recommended that efforts be made, possibly through presentations by college and high school counselors, to explain to students why the tests are necessary.

Perhaps an even more significant issue related to placement testing is that of parental understanding of dual credit offerings. Because dual credit courses count as both high school credit and community college credit, parents and students must be aware of the implications of this "dual credit." If students do not successfully complete such courses, not only do they fail to receive college credit for the courses, but they may also not be able to graduate. There have been situations in which parents have complained that they were not aware of such consequences; these parents were apparently under the impression that failure to complete dual

credit courses resulted only in students' not earning college credit. Numerous graduates and currently enrolled students reported that their parents were never aware of their initial decisions to enroll in the course. It is recommended that both the high schools and community colleges develop methods of providing dual credit information to parents. One possibility is to prepare an informational program brochure that could be distributed to all interested students; individual departments could prepare discipline-specific brochures as well.

Educating parents and students about dual credit programs might also be achieved through stronger communication with high school guidance counselors. Survey data from currently enrolled students indicated that initial program information is frequently provided by high school guidance counselors. It is crucial that students receive accurate program information; therefore, it is recommended that the college provide guidance counselors with relevant program information. The college should also help counselors understand all aspects of dual credit programs so they are able to convey accurate information to prospective dual credit students, as well as to their parents.

Another possible way to address these concerns would be to hold a special orientation session for high school students who are interested in dual credit courses. Such an orientation could be held on the college campus; this would provide prospective students with an opportunity to tour the college's facilities and to meet with counselors, administrators, and faculty. Dual credit faculty and high school administrators could also be invited to participate. Such an orientation could provide program information, as well as help students feel more a part of the community college. It might also reinforce their understanding that dual credit courses are ultimately college-level courses even though they are most often taught in the high school setting. Depending on when the orientation was scheduled, students might also be able to register for classes while on campus, thus facilitating the registration process.

Advising Dual Credit English Students and Graduates

Research identified several advising issues regarding dual credit English beyond the obvious requirement of pre-registration advising. The first involved information related to the

transferability of dual credit English. Two graduates noted that they were not clearly advised that dual credit English courses transferred to four-year colleges and universities. Both students repeated freshmen English courses but indicated they later learned that the four-year institutions to which they transferred would have accepted the credit had they notified the respective Admissions Offices. It was unclear whether the failure to transfer credit resulted from these institutions incorrectly reviewing high school transcripts or whether students should have submitted specific community college transcripts. Regardless of the reason for the error, students should have been better informed about the transferability of their dual credit English courses and, if necessary, instructed in exactly what steps were necessary to ensure that transfer institutions were aware of dual credit courses. It is recommended that community college and high school counselors work cooperatively to develop a better system of disseminating such transfer information.

Another advising issue was identified through recommendations from graduates. One student pointed out that counselors or faculty advisors generally suggest that graduates wait until their sophomore year to enroll in literature courses. This is not unexpected advice, considering most community college students take literature courses during their second year of study (having usually taken ENG 111 and 112 when they were freshman). However, several students noted that postponing enrollment caused an undesirable time lapse between freshman composition courses and literature courses that was not desirable. Conversely, another graduate noted that if students did choose to enroll in literature courses during their freshman year, this meant that they would likely find that their classmates were sophomore students, thus creating some feelings of apprehension. Both students expressed valid points. Therefore, it is recommended that counselors and faculty advisors—both in high school and the community college—consider these issues when advising students.

High School Setting Issues

As noted in both Chapters 3 and 5, issues related to dual credit courses being taught in the high school setting have affected perceptions of course comparability. Research indicated

that this issue of the high school setting played a major role in course transferability. The University of Virginia argues that it is impossible for courses taught in the high school setting to be comparable to those offered on a college campus, pointing specifically to the perception that instruction in high school classes is frequently interrupted. The argument makes reference to interruptions caused by daily announcements over the intercom, pep rallies, assemblies, and other school-related activities. Research indicated that, at least in some high schools, such interruptions do occur. Graduates and students provided anecdotal information indicating this was a problem at some participating high schools but not at others. Several research participants pointed out that dual credit English courses were often scheduled near lunch periods, a practice that helped minimize class interruptions. It is recommended that the Dual credit coordinator work with high school administrators and faculty to increase awareness of the issue of interruptions and seek to keep such interruptions to a minimum.

Textbook Selection

One curricular issue beyond course assignments and teaching methodologies is that of course textbook selection and usage. According to Wytheville Community College policy, texts are to be selected by full-time English department faculty. In most cases, research found that dual credit English faculty were using these approved texts. However, during one of the focus group sessions, students indicated that in at least one instance dual credit students were being allowed to use regular senior English texts. An interview with the former division chair indicated that during his administration, he had made exceptions to the college policy and allowed some faculty to use texts that had not been officially approved by the college's English department. He specifically pointed to situations in which school systems purchased texts for dual credit English students, noting that generally school systems did not adopt new texts, or new editions of texts, as frequently as community colleges. He implied that the exceptions he had granted regarding use of alternate texts had involved only the use of older editions of previously approved texts, knowing that school systems had limited resources. Under these circumstances, use of older editions did not seem to be a major problem; nonetheless, such exceptions could call into question the comparability of dual credit classes to "regular" course

offerings, an issue that has the potential to affect the transferability of dual credit courses. The substitution of a senior English text for a college text raises a more serious issue of course comparability. It is, therefore, recommended that the college monitor more closely the texts being used. Whenever possible the college should avoid granting exceptions to textbook selection policy.

Distinguishing Between Dual Credit and Advanced Placement English Courses

Most high schools in the college's service region had offered Advanced Placement (AP) courses prior to the development and implementation of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment*. In some cases, high schools even insisted on combining the two programs, arguing that the content was essentially the same and that students then had the guaranteed community college credit, yet still qualified to take AP exams if they so desired. Perhaps because of the familiarity with AP courses, at least one dual credit English faculty initially told dual credit students that the courses were AP courses instead of dual credit courses (see Chapter 5). Although the faculty member may have seen no problem with interchanging terms, the reality is that AP and dual credit are two distinct programs. It is recommended that the college work to provide adequate training to high school personnel to ensure that the two programs are not confused.

Other Administrative Issues

As noted earlier in this chapter, research did identify a problem regarding placement policies. Even though most dual credit students are being held to the same admission criteria as other community college students, there should be no exceptions made to any student in terms of placement. It is recommended that the college be vigilant in making sure all students complete required developmental courses prior to enrollment in ENG 111.

Related to the placement issue is that of course registration. Each semester there tends to be a delay in processing dual credit registration. Even though the college regularly sends counselors to the high schools to assist with student registration, the registration process is not

always streamlined. Frequently registration forms are not submitted to the Admissions and Records Office in a timely fashion. This is not entirely unexpected, considering the high schools do not operate on the same academic calendar as the college. Obviously, arrangements must be made to accommodate these differing schedules. However, it seems that some schools are regularly late in submitting registration forms. This poses problems in terms of skewing enrollment data. It is not unusual for administrators to have to estimate dual credit enrollment figures. Considering that dual credit generates 10 percent of Wytheville Community College's overall enrollment, it is important that enrollment data be as accurate as possible, for both planning and budgeting purposes. It is recommended that the college work cooperatively with the high schools to develop reasonable deadlines for submission of registration data and that, if necessary, policy also include specific procedures for transporting registration forms to the Admissions and Records Office (i.e., a counselor collects completed forms by a certain deadline, or the high school guidance department collects all forms and delivers them to the college campus). As noted earlier in this chapter, another possible mechanism for facilitating dual credit registration would be to invite prospective students to an on-campus orientation session during which they could register for classes.

The registration problem itself is perhaps symptomatic of a larger administrative issue. Despite the efforts of numerous administrators, the overall administration of the general dual credit program is somewhat decentralized. As noted in Chapter 3, program responsibility, by necessity, stretches across the college's three academic divisions. The dual credit coordinator attempts to manage the many facets of the program, but the fact that there are eight participating high schools, coupled with geographic and time constraints, make overall program coordination complicated at best. The director of continuing education, who also serves as the dual credit coordinator, is responsible for oversight of all continuing education programs, the college's two education centers, workforce development, apprenticeship-related instruction, and the college's Small Business Development Center. It is, therefore, recommended that the college review the responsibilities of the dual credit coordinator and determine if the role of dual credit coordinator

is appropriately assigned to the director of continuing education or if another administrative organizational structure would be more appropriate.

Faculty Linkage Programs

As noted in Chapters 3 and 4, administrators and faculty from both high schools and community colleges recognize the value of communication between dual credit English faculty and community college English department faculty. The current linkage program in which full-time English faculty are assigned to work with dual credit English faculty should be continued and strengthened. Ideally, at least one full-time faculty should be granted release time to work directly with dual credit English, facilitating communication and coordinating professional development activities appropriate for all English faculty. The success of Syracuse University's Project Advance, one of the premier dual credit programs in the United States, provides one possible model:

> Most important in the working structure of the program is the direct contact and communication between the supervising faculty and their colleagues in the schools. Visits are made at least once each semester to each of the schools. These visits include meetings with students, administrators, and guidance personnel; but their primary purpose is to review student folders and to confer with the adjunct instructors in a collegial, helping relationship that ultimately determines the success of the cooperative effort. (Daly 32)

Both high schools and the community college should financially support such efforts.

Another option to facilitate communication might be to develop a list-serv for dual credit English. Such a list-serv could provide an avenue for communication among faculty, both dual credit and community college faculty. Participants could share ideas and discuss successes,

problems, or concerns. Most faculty now have Internet access and/or e-mail accounts, so the use of technology should enhance communication efforts.

Program Assessment and Faculty Evaluation

Both qualitative and quantitative measures provided evidence that most administrators and students were satisfied with the quality of most dual credit English programs. Many dual credit English faculty also perceived programs to be strong. Moreover, grade analysis data indicate that students are succeeding in subsequent writing-intensive courses. While such data are encouraging in terms of the quality of the overall dual credit English program, stronger program assessment measures could further validate course quality. As noted in Chapter 2, community colleges, including Wytheville Community College, are required to submit regular assessment reports to the Virginia Community College System, and accrediting agencies carefully review assessment procedures.

Both to facilitate this reporting process and, more importantly, to promote stronger administrative oversight of dual credit offerings at Wytheville Community College, it is recommended that the college require regular written reports on all dual credit courses. Such reports might include documentation of dual credit faculty credentials, determine if faculty were following approved course outlines and using approved course texts, evaluate whether or not faculty were utilizing appropriate teaching methodology, and verify that required student evaluations of each dual credit courses had been received.

Initial interview data indicated that student evaluations were a regular part of the dual credit English faculty evaluation process, but research found that not all dual credit English faculty were being evaluated. One dual credit English faculty had never returned any student evaluations, and another faculty had submitted only one set of student evaluations during the seven years she taught dual credit English. Clearly the college should carefully monitor compliance with this policy, and regular required reports would likely eliminate this problem.

It is further recommended that faculty evaluation be expanded to include regular classroom observations, preferably conducted by both high school and community college administrators. Data from such observations would certainly strengthen assessment of course comparability and quality. Annual evaluation conference should also be an effective means of addressing this issue.

Another suggestion for improved assessment is to require all students in ENG 111 and 112 to submit portfolios of their work and copies of assignments to be reviewed annually. Such an assessment tool should be effective in terms of providing data on types and quality of course assignments, as well as indicators of faculty grading practices. Wytheville Community College completed a special assessment project involving dual credit students enrolled in ENG 112, and data showed that these dual credit English students did as well or better than students in "regular" ENG 112 courses. However, this particular assessment activity is not done routinely. It is recommended that the college make this or similar types of assessment measures a regular part of English department assessment plans.

Program assessment might also be revised to include on-going tracking of dual credit English graduate success rates in subsequent writing-intensive courses and, if possible, in career writing. However, such reviews will obviously be time-consuming, and some type of compensation will need to be established for those involved in the review process.

Further Research

The findings from this study of dual credit English have identified both program strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for program improvement have been made. Beyond these specific recommendations, Wytheville Community College should continue its annual survey of dual credit students, which includes all students enrolled in all dual credit courses—not just English. The college might also consider developing discipline-specific survey questions to enhance dual credit assessment measures. Overall program assessment should always include dual credit courses, as well as regular course offerings; this would provide a stronger basis for establishing the level of course comparability.

Additional research is needed to verify the success of dual credit English graduates. These data are needed both from students who choose to attend Wytheville Community College and subsequently transfer to these four-year institutions and from students who matriculate directly from high school to four-year institutions. Assessment measures should include grade analyses and, if possible, writing sample analyses. On-going interviews with full-time English faculty at Wytheville Community College regarding dual credit English graduates would also be useful. Also, interviews with four-year college and university faculty who teach dual credit English faculty in writing-intensive courses would likely provide interesting data. Case studies of dual credit English faculty might offer insights in the day-to-day management of dual credit English courses.

Future research should also include analyses of teaching and grading practices of dual credit English faculty. This should be done through a cooperative effort of both high school and community college administration. Annual or semi-annual focus group sessions with dual credit English faculty and with dual credit English students would also provide valuable data.

In addition to research on dual credit English, studies of dual credit offerings in other disciplines would provide valuable data for both those disciplines and for the overall dual credit program in general.

Conclusions

National trends suggest that the popularity of dual credit courses is likely to continue. Because English is a core requirement of most community college degree programs, dual credit English courses will likely remain a strong component of overall dual credit programs.

The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* is a well-crafted document, providing clear guidelines governing dual credit offerings in Virginia. The Virginia Community College System, in general, and Wytheville Community College, in particular, recognize that dual credit programs provide opportunities for developing and expanding valuable community college-high school partnerships that can be mutually beneficial. The Virginia Community College System and

Wytheville Community College remain cognizant of their responsibility to provide high-quality dual credit courses to the increasingly large numbers of high school students who enroll in these unique programs.

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*I conducted formal and informal interviews with full-time community college faculty, dual credit faculty, and high school administrators, but because some individuals requested to remain anonymous, not all names of individuals interviewed are provided in this reference list.

APPENDIX A

VIRGINIA PLAN FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

BETWEEN

VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Broadly speaking, dual enrollment allows high school students to meet the requirements for high school graduation while simultaneously earning college credit. The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* gives a state-wide framework for dual enrollment arrangements between the public schools and community colleges. These arrangements may be made at the local level, i.e., between the representatives or boards of the participating public school and the participating community college authorized to contract such agreements. These arrangements may be formed in three distinct ways. First, high school students may be enrolled in the regularly scheduled college credit courses with the other college students taught at the community college. Second, high school students may be enrolled in specifically scheduled college credit courses exclusively for high school students taught at the high school. Third, high school students may be enrolled in specially scheduled college credit courses exclusively for high school students taught at the community college. In the latter two cases where the college credit courses are specifically scheduled for the high school students, these courses shall have the same academic rigor as, and meet all of the college accreditation standards of, the regularly scheduled college credit courses. In all cases, the particular courses to be offered shall be determined through the mutual agreement of the participating public school and community college.

Purpose

The purpose of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* is both to provide a wider range of course options for high school students and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of programs, in the academic, fine arts, and vocational subject areas where appropriate. As such,

the plan promotes rigorous educational pursuits and encourages learning as a lifelong process; it recognizes that high school students who accrue college credit are more likely to continue with their education beyond high school than those who do not. The plan also offers a direct cost benefit to the Commonwealth of Virginia, especially as it avoids the unnecessary duplication of facilities and equipment, and to the individual families of the high school students.

Student Eligibility

All high school juniors and seniors who are sixteen years of age or older are eligible to participate in the dual enrollment arrangement between the public school and community college. However, appropriate public school and community college officials should take the necessary steps to assure that every student who is registered under the dual enrollment arrangement is "qualified," i.e., is amply prepared for the demands of a college level course and can benefit from the enrichment opportunity. (Exceptions to this policy for student eligibility may be made on a case by case basis, with the approval of the public school superintendent and appropriate community college official.)

Admissions Requirements

Section 7a. and 7b. of Standard C of the 1988-89 "Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia" govern the admissions requirements in dual enrollment arrangements. First, the public school principal must approve the cross-registration of the high school student to the community college. Second, the community college must accept the high school student for admission to the college level course. In other words, the high school student must be recommended by the public school and must meet the admissions requirements established by the community college.

Course Eligibility

Courses may be drawn from the academic, fine arts, and vocational subject areas. The courses must be offered for college credit and may be part of a degree, certificate, or diploma

program at the community college. Regardless of the subject area, no developmental or health and physical education courses shall be eligible for a dual enrollment arrangement.

Credit Awarded

College credit shall be awarded by the community college to the participating high school students upon successful completion of the course. The award shall be in compliance with state and regional accrediting standards.

High school credit shall also be awarded to the participating high school students upon successful completion of the course. The award shall be based on the college credit hour, with one high school unit equivalent to six semester hours of college credit.

Selection of Faculty

The faculty shall be selected and employed by the participating community college. They shall meet the minimum requirements set by Form VCCS-29. If a particular part-time faculty member of the community college is employed simultaneously full time by the public school, the college may reimburse the public school board for the services of its faculty member in lieu of direct compensation to the faculty member; alternate faculty compensation plans may be negotiated by the participating community college and public school.

Tuition and Fees

According to Section 7 of Standard C of the 1988-89 "Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia," schools and colleges are encouraged to provide high school students the opportunity for dual enrollment at no tuition cost to them or their families. In addition, neither the public school nor the community college shall be penalized in their respective state appropriations for developing and implementing the dual enrollment arrangement. The public school shall receive average daily membership credit for its students who participate in the dual enrollment arrangement, and the community college shall receive FTES (full-time equivalent student) credit for the participating high school students.

Compliance with Accreditation Standards

The *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* complies with the criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and with the 1988-89 "Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia."

Assessment

Assessment has long been recognized in Virginia as an important aspect of an effective instructional program. In this spirit, all dual enrollment arrangements developed and implemented under the auspices of the *Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment* shall include a formal mechanism for evaluation.

APPENDIX B

ENG 111: COLLEGE COMPOSITION I

Course Outline

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 111: College Composition I is a transfer course with a prerequisite of either satisfactory scores on appropriate placement examination or satisfactory completion of appropriate English developmental courses. The course meets three hours a week and counts as three credits. ENG 111 develops writing ability for study, work, and other areas of writing based on experience, observation, research, and reading of selected literature.

II. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

ENG 111 is a writing course. Through lecture, discussion, and writing, the student will learn to integrate experience in thinking, reading, listening, and speaking. The student will be introduced to writing as a process: understanding audience and purpose, exploring ideas and information, composing, revising, and editing.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through writing assignments and critiques, the intent of ENG 111 is to provide students with the ability to communicate a central theme or idea with originality. Each paper's ideas will be clearly state, logical, and thought-provoking, expressed in carefully chosen, effective words and phrases, with proficient use of grammatical and mechanical conventions.

Upon completion of ENG 111, the student should be able to compose paragraphs and essays which reflect the following rhetorical accomplishments.

The student will

A. demonstrate familiarity with several types of writing: description, narration,, exposition, analysis, persuasion.

B. develop a clear, concise thesis.

C. develop full the thesis statement in carefully constructed paragraphs.

D. show competence in fundamental qualities of effective prose: coherence, unity, etc.

E. exhibit proficiency in grammatical and mechanical conventions.

IV. COURSE OUTLINE

Much of the class time will be spent in discussion of the various types of composition and the modes of development, in critiquing model and student essays, and in covering those areas of weaknesses demonstrated in student writings. These will specifically include

A. Modes of discourse: Narration, description, exposition, argumentation

B. Methods of development: Comparison, contrast, analogy, example, definition, classification, illustration

C. Various handbook chapters in grammar and mechanics: Fragments, comma splices, punctuation, spelling, agreement, pronoun reference, etc.

D. Technical aspects of writing: Transitional devices, weak repetition, parallel structure, etc.

E. Emphasis upon pre-writing (invention, purpose, audience, planning, and drafting), re-writing, polishing, and proofreading

F. Critical thinking and logical thought: Analysis, insight, open-mindedness, logical fallacies, etc.

A minimum of six pieces of writing will be done during the semester. Specific instructions will be given for each assignment. Emphasis will be placed on content, form, style, and mechanics. The instructor will determine the selection of writings and the order of these writings from the following types:

Writing Assignments

(Required strategies are preceded by an asterisk)

*1. Narrative Essay

2. Descriptive Essay

*3. Argumentative Essay

4. Expository Essay

*5. Analytical Essay

*6. Literary Analysis Essay

7. Illustration, Definition, Classification Essay

8. Compare and Contrast Essay

9. Process Essay

V. EVALUATION

The student's grade will be based primarily on writing assignments. The instructor will determine the weight to be given each piece of writing and assignments.

A. Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Use of a clearly stated thesis statement

2. Adequate and coherent development of the thesis in the body of the essay

3. Use of appropriate diction and style

4. Avoidance of major mechanical errors (e.g., sentence fragments, comma splices, spelling errors, etc.)

B. Grades on essays will be assigned as follows:

1. Superior essays

a. The "A" paper states and develops with originality a central theme or idea. The paper concentrates on a main purpose, supporting the purpose firmly and developing it fully. The paper's ideas are clearly stated, logical, and thought-provoking, expressed in carefully constructed, well-organized paragraphs and sentences and written in carefully chosen, effective words and phrases. The essay shows proficient use of grammatical and mechanical conventions.

b. The "B" paper has a clearly individual insight and clearly stated purpose, logically and adequately developed. It is relatively free from errors in the use of grammatical and mechanical conventions of written English prose. Although the "B" paper indicates imaginative insights, it lacks the reinforcing qualities of mechanics and style which characterize the "A" paper.

2. Satisfactory essays

The "C" paper contains satisfactory or average writing techniques. The paper has a central idea which is organized clearly enough to convey the paper'' purpose to the reader. It avoids serious, repeated errors in grammar and mechanics. The paper may, in fact, have few corrections in grammar and mechanics, and few correction marks on it, but it lacks the vigor, logic, or clarity of thought and expression which would entitle it to superior rating.

3. Unsatisfactory essays

   a. The "D" paper indicates below average achievement in conceiving and articulating ideas effectively. Most "D" papers contain repeated errors in grammar and mechanics or fail to present and develop fully a single, central idea.

   b. The "F" paper fails to conceive, state, develop, and support a main idea. It may also contain serious errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

      1) Failing essays may be rewritten. If there is a significant improvement, the grade will be averaged with the "F" paper.

      2) Rewritten essays must be turned in within one week after original version is returned.

C. Late essays

1. Essays will be assigned at least one week in advance to provide the student ample time to compose and revise his or her work before turning it in. Consequently, an "emergency" arising the night before the

essay is due will not constitute a justifiable excuse for the essay's being late.

2. Late essays must be accompanied by a note of explanation.

3. If the reason for the paper's being late is unacceptable, the grade will be lowered.

4. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE INSTRUCTOR ACCEPT LATE ESSAYS OR MAKEUP WORK AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES.

D. Supplemental Assignments, Class Participation, and Short Quizzes

1. Supplemental Assignments: The instructor will periodically assign work to be done outside of class and turned in for a grade.

2. Class participation: Students will be expected to have read the assigned material by the date it is due so that the instructor's lecture and class discussion will be meaningful. Active class participation can enhance a student's grade.

3. Short quizzes may be given during the semester.

E. Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at classes is required. When absence from a class becomes necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor prior to the absence, whenever possible. The student is responsible for making up all work missed during the absence. Any instruction missed and not made up will necessarily affect the grade of the student regardless of the reason for the absence.

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APPENDIX C

ENG 112: COLLEGE COMPOSITON II

Course Outline

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 112: College Composition II is a transfer course and the second course of a two-course sequence (ENG 111: College Composition I is a prerequisite). The course meets three hours per week and counts as three credits. ENG 112 continues to help students develop writing skills practiced in ENG 111 with an emphasis on writing the research paper and writing analytical essays about literature.

II. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

ENG 112 is a writing course. Through lecture, discussion, reading, and writing, the student will become familiar with the literary genres of prose, poetry, and drama, will learn how to write a literary analysis, and will learn how to synthesize analytical, compositional, and research skills into a research paper.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through reading and writing assignments, the intent of ENG 112 is to provide students with the ability to

A. analyze a literary piece,

B. communicate that analysis in an essay that successfully employs all the skills learned in ENG 111,

C. learn and use research methods, and

D. employ those research skills in a documented paper.

Upon completion of ENG 112, the student should be able to compose essays and a research paper.

The student will

A. demonstrate familiarity with the genre of prose, poetry, and drama;

B. demonstrate an understanding of the terminology associated with the various genres;

C. analyze a literary piece, make a statement about that piece, and support that statement with evidence from the literary piece;

D. exhibit an understanding of research skills, including using the library, note-taking, documentation, and preparation of a bibliography;

E. illustrate a proficiency in the compositional skills acquired in ENG 111.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class time will be spent in discussing poems, short stories, plays, and research skills, including:

A. Poems—rhythm, rhyme, pattern, theme, imagery, figures of speech, sound devices, symbol;

B. Short stories—escape and interpretation, theme, point of view, symbol, plot, character, irony;

C. Drama—tragedy, comedy, realism, non-realism;

D. Research skills

1. Selecting and narrowing a topic

2. Developing a thesis

3. Outlining

4. Using the library

5. Note-taking

6. Synthesizing primary and secondary resources with original thoughts

7. Documenting sources and avoiding plagiarism

8. Drafting introductions and conclusions

9. Constructing a bibliography

10. Mechanics of manuscript preparation

11. Editing and proofreading

In addition to the research paper, four essays on literature will be completed during the semester. Approximately one third of the semester should be devoted to the research paper writing assignment. The remaining weeks should be devoted to studying and writing about the three literary genres.

IV. EVALUATION

The student's grade will be based on the writing assignments, tests on literary genres and/or research skills, final exam, and class participation. The instructor will determine the weight to be given each component, but the research paper should carry more weight than any other single element.

A. Late work

1. With the exception of in-class essays, all written work will be assigned in advance to provide the student ample time to compose and revise his or her work before turning it in. Consequently, an "emergency" arising

the night before written work is due will not constitute a justifiable excuse for the work's being late.

2. Late essays must be accompanied by a note of explanation.

3. If the reason for the paper's being late is unacceptable, the grade will be lowered.

4. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE INSTRUCTOR ACCEPT LATE ESSAYS OR MAKEUP WORK AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST WEEK OF CLASS BEFORE EXAMS.

B. Supplemental Assignments, Class Participation, and Short Quizzes

1. Supplemental Assignments: The instructor will periodically assign work to be done outside of class and turned in for a grade.

2. Class Participation: Students will be expected to have read the assigned material by the date it is due so that the instructor's lecture and class discussion will be meaningful. Active class participation can enhance a student's grade.

3. Short quizzes may be given during the semester.

C. Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at classes is required. When absence from a class becomes necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor prior to the absence, whenever possible. The student is responsible for making up all work missed during the absence. Any instruction missed and not made up will necessarily affect the grade of the student regardless of the reason for the absence.

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX D

Questions for Interviews with Community College Administrators

1. How long have you been involved with the dual credit program at Wytheville Community college?

2. Exactly what is your role in the dual credit program?

3. Do you believe the VCCS should have a system-wide policy on dual credit? Why or why not?

4. What do you believe are the benefits of the dual credit English program?

5. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the dual credit English program?

6. How are dual credit faculty selected?

7. Would it be possible for full-time English faculty to teach the dual credit English faculty? Why or why not?

8. How often do you contact other administrators or dual credit English faculty?

9. Do you think there should be additional contact between full-time community college English faculty and dual credit English faculty? Why or why not?

10. Explain the financial agreements related to dual credit programs.

11. How are dual credit English courses assessed?

12. Do you foresee distance education being used for the delivery of dual credit English courses? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E

Questions for Interviews with High School Administrators

Interviews with high school administrators generally included the following types of questions:

1. How long have you been involved with the dual credit program at Wytheville Community College?

2. How long have dual credit courses been offered at your school?

3. Exactly what is your role in the dual credit program?

4. What do you believe are the benefits of the dual credit English program?

5. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the dual credit English program?

6. How are dual credit English faculty selected? How many English faculty have credentials to teach dual credit English?

7. Would it be possible for full-time community college English faculty to teach the dual credit English classes? Why or why not?

8. How often do you contact other community college administrators?

9. Do you think there should be additional contact between full-time community college English faculty and the dual credit English faculty? Why or why not?

10. Explain the financial agreements related to dual credit programs.

11. Does the dual credit English faculty member receive adjunct pay for teaching dual credit English courses?

12. Approximately how many students enroll in the dual credit English program each year?

13. How are dual credit English courses assessed?

14. To what degree is the dual credit program publicized to students?

15. Which high school students are allowed to take the college's placement test to determine if they may enroll in dual credit English?

16. To what degree is technology available in your school?

17. How well do dual credit English course transfer to other institutions?

18. Do you foresee distance education being used for the delivery of dual credit English courses? Why or why not?

APPENDIX F

Questions for Interviews with Community College English Faculty

Interviews with full-time community college English faculty generally included the following types of questions:

1. How long have you been involved with the dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College?

2. Exactly what is your role in the dual credit English program?

3. Do you believe the Virginia Community College System should have a system-wide policy on dual credit? Why or why not?

4. What do you believe are the benefits of the dual credit English program?

5. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the dual credit English program?

6. Based on your experience in teaching literature classes, how well prepared are the graduates of dual credit English who subsequently enroll in upper-level courses?

7. How would you classify the perception of other full-time faculty you have worked with toward dual credit English?

8. How often do you have contact with dual credit English faculty?

9. Do you think there should be any more contact between full-time community college faculty and the dual credit English faculty? Why or why not?

10. How effectively do you think the program is administered?

11. How are dual credit English courses assessed?

APPENDIX G

Questions for Interviews with Dual Credit English Faculty

Interviews with dual credit English faculty generally included the following types of questions:

1. How long have you been involved with the dual credit English program at Wytheville Community College?

2. Exactly what is your role in the dual credit English program?

3. What do you believe are the benefits of the dual credit English program?

4. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the dual credit English program?

5. What is your opinion of the placement test used to determine eligibility for enrollment in dual credit English?

6. How do you think teaching the dual credit English courses in the high school setting affects the courses, if at all?

7. Have you talked with graduates of the dual credit English program, and if so, what are their retrospective perceptions about the program?

8. How involved are the parents of dual credit English students involved in the program, particularly in students' decisions to enroll?

9. Based on your work with students, how well do the dual credit English courses transfer to other colleges and universities?

10. Have you talked with graduates, and if so, how has dual credit English prepared them for subsequent college-level and career writing?

11. What is your opinion of the texts selected for the dual credit English courses?

12. How effective are the professional development opportunities provided by Wytheville Community College?

13. How often do you have contact with full-time community college English faculty?

14. Do you think there should be any more contact between full-time community college faculty and the dual credit English faculty? Why or why not?

15. How effectively do you think the program is administered?

16. How are dual credit English courses assessed?

APPENDIX H

Questions for Interviews with Dual Credit English Graduates

Interviews with dual credit English graduates generally included the following types of questions:

1. How long have you been (or were you) enrolled in college?
2. During what year were you enrolled in dual credit English?
3. What high school did you attend?
4. Who was your dual credit English teacher?
5. Were the dual credit English courses taught during one semester or were both ENG 111 and ENG 112 taught during two semesters?
6. How did you first learn about dual credit English?
7. How many other students were enrolled in the dual credit English courses when you were enrolled?
8. How, if at all, were your parents involved in your decision to take dual credit English courses?
9. What kinds of activities and assignments did you do in dual credit English courses?
10. Since you have been enrolled at a college or employed, how well would you say your dual credit English courses prepared you for the kinds of writing you have had to do?
11. How do you think dual credit English courses compare to non-dual credit senior English courses?
12. Did the same teacher who taught dual credit English also teach non-dual credit senior English?

13. How often, if at all, were your dual credit English classes interrupted for other activities? If there were interruptions, what were those interruptions?

14. What grade did you earn in dual credit English?

15. What grades have you received (or did you receive) in subsequent college English courses? What grades have you received (or did you receive) in other college courses?

16. Have you had to do much writing in college courses other than English courses? If so, which ones?

17. [For Wytheville Community College students only] Where do you plan to transfer?

18. If other students were considering taking dual credit English courses, what advice or recommendations would you give them?

19. What do you believe are the benefits of the dual credit English program?

20. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the dual credit English program?

21. If you could go back and tell your dual credit English teacher or high school or community college administrators anything about dual credit English, what would you tell them?

22. What other dual credit courses have you taken?

23. How well did the dual credit English courses transfer to other colleges and universities?

24. What is your opinion of the texts selected for the dual credit English courses?

APPENDIX I

SURVEY OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH

Instructions: Please answer the following questions thoroughly and honestly. If you need more space to write than is provided, please use a separate sheet of paper. To remain anonymous, please do not write your name on this survey. Also, please do not identify your school, teacher or other school personnel by name. Information from this survey will be reviewed only by the researcher and her research advisory committee at Virginia Tech, and reports based on the survey will not identify specific students or schools. The questions in this survey are designed to help identify strengths and weaknesses of the dual credit English program offered through Wytheville Community College.

1. How did you learn about dual credit English courses?
2. Who, if anyone, influenced your decision to enroll in dual credit English courses? (Please give only titles of people who influenced you and not specific names—i.e., parents, friends, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.)
3. How involved were your parents/guardians in your decision to enroll in dual credit English?
4. If you considered not taking the course, what were the reasons you hesitated?
5. What, if anything, had you heard about the course before you enrolled?
6. Where did you take the placement test that determined if you would be able to enroll in dual credit English?
7. Describe the types of assignments you have had to complete in dual credit English. Please be as specific as possible. List the types of assignments and specific types of requirements for these assignments.

8. Without naming your teacher, please describe the types of activities you have done during class, such as discussions, group work, class projects, in-class writing assignments, or other activities.

9. How often do you have homework assignments in dual credit English?

10. Describe types of homework assignments.

11. How long does it generally take for you to complete your homework assignments for dual credit English? Give specific examples.

12. Based on your experiences in other high school English courses you have taken, how do the dual credit English courses compare?

13. Based on what you hear about senior English from other students, how do you think dual credit English compares to senior English? Please be as specific as possible.

14. What is your opinion about the textbooks that are required in dual credit English courses?

15. Explain what you think are the advantages of taking dual credit English.

16. Explain what you think are the disadvantages of taking dual credit English.

17. Discuss any changes you think should be made in dual credit English.

18. Are you enrolled in dual credit courses in other subjects? If so, please list.

19. How much writing are your required to do in other high school or dual credit classes that you are taking?

20. How much reading are you required to do in other high school or dual credit courses that you are taking?

21. How often is your class time in dual credit English interrupted or canceled? What are the reasons for interruptions or cancellations?

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. I appreciate your assistance.

APPENDIX J

SURVEY RESULTS

Question #1: How did you learn about dual credit English?

Source of information	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Guidance counselors or department	53	55%
Peers/friends	34	35%
Teachers	31	32%
Siblings	5	5%
School	5	5%
Placement test	3	3%
Parents	1	1%
College catalog	1	1%

Question #2: Who, if anyone, influenced your decision to enroll in dual credit English?

Person/people influencing	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Parents	37	38%
Teachers	37	38%
Peers/friends	30	31%
Guidance counselor or department	22	23%
Myself	21	22%
Siblings	9	9%
No one	7	7%

Question #3: How involved were your parents/guardians in your decision to enroll in dual credit English?

Level of involvement	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Very involved	49	51%
Somewhat involved	17	18%
Not very involved	16	16%
No involvement	15	15%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question #4: If you considered not taking dual credit English, what were the reasons you hesitated?

Reason	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Did not hesitate	30	31%
Amount of work	27	28%
Difficulty of work	22	23%
Required full year of English instead of one semester for senior English	7	7%
Taking other dual credit courses	5	5%
Did not like English	5	5%
Teacher	4	4%
Stress	3	3%
Placement test	2	2%

Question #5: What, if anything, had you heard about the dual credit English courses had you heard before you enrolled?

Information heard about dual credit English prior to student enrollment	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Courses were difficult	42	43%
Courses required a great deal of work	33	34%
Courses were worthwhile and good college preparation	31	32%
Good dual credit English teacher	9	9%
Had not heard much about the course	9	9%
Courses were challenging	5	5%
Negative comments about the dual credit English teacher	4	4%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question # 6: Where did you take the placement test that determined if you would be able to enroll in dual credit English (at your high school, on the college campus, or somewhere else)?

Location	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
High school	91	94%
College campus	4	4%
Galax Education Center	2	2%

Question #7: Describe the types of assignments you have had to complete in dual credit English. Please be as specific as possible. List the types of assignments and specific types of requirements for those assignments.

Assignment	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Essays	94	94%
Reading	82	85%
Research	60	62%
Tests/quizzes	32	33%
Grammar	15	15%
Logs/journals	12	12%
Oral presentations	7	7%
Vocabulary	5	5%
Answering questions	3	3%
Worksheets	1	1%

Question #8: Without naming your teacher, please describe the types of activities you have done during class, such as discussions, group work, class projects, in-class writing assignments, or other activities.

Activities	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Discussions	74	75%
Writing	68	69%
Group work	25	26%
In-class writing/freewriting	22	23%
Presentations	15	16%
Peer editing	13	13%
Research	11	11%
Quizzes/tests	9	9%
Vocabulary	5	5%
Videos	3	3%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Activities	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Lectures	3	3%
Grammar	1	1%
Worksheets	1	1%

Question #9: How often do you have homework assignments in dual credit English?

Homework frequency	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Frequently (almost every night)	39	40%
Every night	23	24%
2-3 nights per week	16	17%
Not often*	14	14%
Depends on assignment	3	3%
Moderate amount	2	2%

*All responses of "not often" were reported from only two schools.

Question #10: Describe types of homework assignments.

Type of homework	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Writing/essays	91	94%
Reading	68	70%
Journals/logs	21	22%
Research	21	22%
Grammar	14	14%
Questions on literature	10	10%
Studying	6	6%
Worksheets	6	6%
Vocabulary	5	5%
Taking notes	4	4%
Take home quizzes	2	2%
Typing papers	1	1%

Question #11: How long does it generally take you to complete your homework assignments for dual credit English? Give specific examples.

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*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

General

Time	Number Responding
30-45 minutes/night	6
30 minutes to 1 hour/night	3
30 minutes to 1 ½ hour/night	1
30 minutes to 2 hours/night	1
1 hour/night	3
1-1 ½ hour/night	3
1-2 hours/night	1
1-5 hours/night	1
2 hours/night	2
2-3 hours/night	1
15 minutes-2 hours/night	1
1 day	1
Minimal amounts	1
Not too long	1
A few hours	1
Too long	1
Time depends on assignment	14

Writing Assignments (i.e., essays)

Time	Number Responding
30 minutes/night	4
45 minutes/night	1
1 hour/night	2
1-2 hours/night	6
2 hours/night	8
2-3 hours/night	4
3-4 hours/night	3
5-12 hours/night	1
Several hours	3
1 night/week	2
1-2 days	1
1-3 days	1
Few days	5
1 week	7
2 weeks	3

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Research Assignments

Time	Number Responding
Several days	3
10 days	2
3-4 weeks	2

Reading Assignments

Time	Number Responding
15 minutes/night	1
30 minutes/night	5
45 minutes/night	1
30 minutes-1 hour/night	14
1 hour/night	6
1-2 hours/night	6
2 hours/night	1
1 week (novel)	1

Logs/Journals

Time	Number Responding
10-20 minutes/night	3
30 minutes/night	6
30 minutes-1 hour/night	1
1 hour/night	2
2 hours/night	1

Answering Questions

Time	Number Responding
10-15 minutes/night	1
20 minutes/night	1
30 minutes/night	1
1 hour/night	2
1-2 hours/night	2

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Completing Worksheets

Time	Number Responding
20 minutes/night	1
30 minutes/night	1
1 hour/night	1

Preparing for presentations

Time	Number Responding
30-45 minutes/night	1
1 hour/night	1

Question #12: Based on your experiences in other high school classes you have taken, how do the dual credit English courses compare?

Comparison	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
More challenging/higher level courses	27	28%
More difficult	25	26%
More writing	21	22%
Learned more in dual credit	14	15%
Similar or about the same	10	10%
More time consuming	8	8%
Better teacher	5	5%
Liked courses better	4	4%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question #13: Based on what you hear about senior English from other students, how do you think dual credit English compares to senior English? Please be as specific as possible.

Comparison	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Dual credit English is more difficult than senior English.	87	90%
Dual credit English is more challenging than senior English, and students learn more.	21	22%
Dual credit English is more interesting than senior English.	2	2%
Dual credit English is very similar to senior English.	1	1%
Dual credit English is easier than senior English.	1	1%

Question #14: What is your opinion about the textbooks that are required in dual credit English courses?

Opinions	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Positive comments about the texts ("liked the text"; "texts were useful"; "excellent")	74	76%
"Texts were too expensive."	15	15%
Negative comments about the texts other than comments concerning texts being too expensive ("didn't like the texts"; "texts need to be updated").	11	11%
Students were required to read more novels than information from texts.	1	1

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question #15: Explain what you think are the advantages of taking dual credit English.

Advantage	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Provides overall preparation for college-level work and for better writing skills	75	77%
Students save time (can complete college earlier)	28	30%
Students earn college credit	21	22%
Students save money	13	13%
Provides academic challenge	4	4%

Question #16: Explain what you think are the disadvantages of taking dual credit English.

Disadvantage	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Extra time required to complete course work	33	34%
Difficulty of the work	18	19%
Students miss some senior English course content	8	8%
Scheduling issues (full year of English instead of one semester for senior English)	8	8%
Stress	4	4%
Difference in grading	2	2%
Effect on other courses	2	2%
No disadvantages noted	30	31%

Question #17: Discuss any changes you think should be made in dual credit English.

Recommended change	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
None	58	59%
Courses should be easier; require fewer assignments	5	5%
Need newer books or different books	4	4%
Need different teacher	3	3%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Recommended change	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
Need more required books	2	2%
Need to be more like college classes	2	2%
High school students are not prepared for college-level work	1	1%
Courses should be better explained to students prior to student enrollment	1	1%
Reward creativity; write fiction	3	3%
Schedule classes to follow college calendar instead of high school calendar	1	1%
Dual credit courses should count for more college credit	1	1%
Testing methods	1	1%
Requirements	1	1%
Both dual credit English courses should be taught in one semester	1	1%
More correspondence between college professors and students	1	1%
Cover material more quickly	1	1%
Different grading scale	1	1%
More literature	1	1%
More writing	1	1%
Fewer quizzes	1	1%
Easier tests	1	1%
Less homework	1	1%
Follow syllabus	1	1%
Focus on spelling	1	1%
Focus more on literature and authors	1	1%
Less expensive texts	1	1%
No final exam	1	1%
Not fill out surveys	1	1%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question #18: Are you enrolled in dual credit courses in other subjects? If so, please list.

Other Dual Credit Courses	Number Responding
Biology	47
Calculus	45
Government	18
Political Science	14
History	6
Advanced Math	5
Computer Science	5
Physics	5
LPN	4
Spanish	4
Chemistry	3
Administrative Support Technology	1
Sociology	1
Electronics	1
No other dual credit courses	13

Question #19: How much writing are you required to do in other high school or dual credit classes that you are taking?

Amount of Writing	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
A lot/quite a bit	29	29%
Moderate	7	7%
Same as dual credit English	1	1%
Not much	49	49%
None	11	11%

Question #20: How much reading are you required to do in other high school or dual credit classes that you are taking?

Amount of Reading	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
A lot/quite a bit	30	30%
Moderate	14	14%
Same as dual credit English	4	4%
Not much	38	38%
None	11	11%

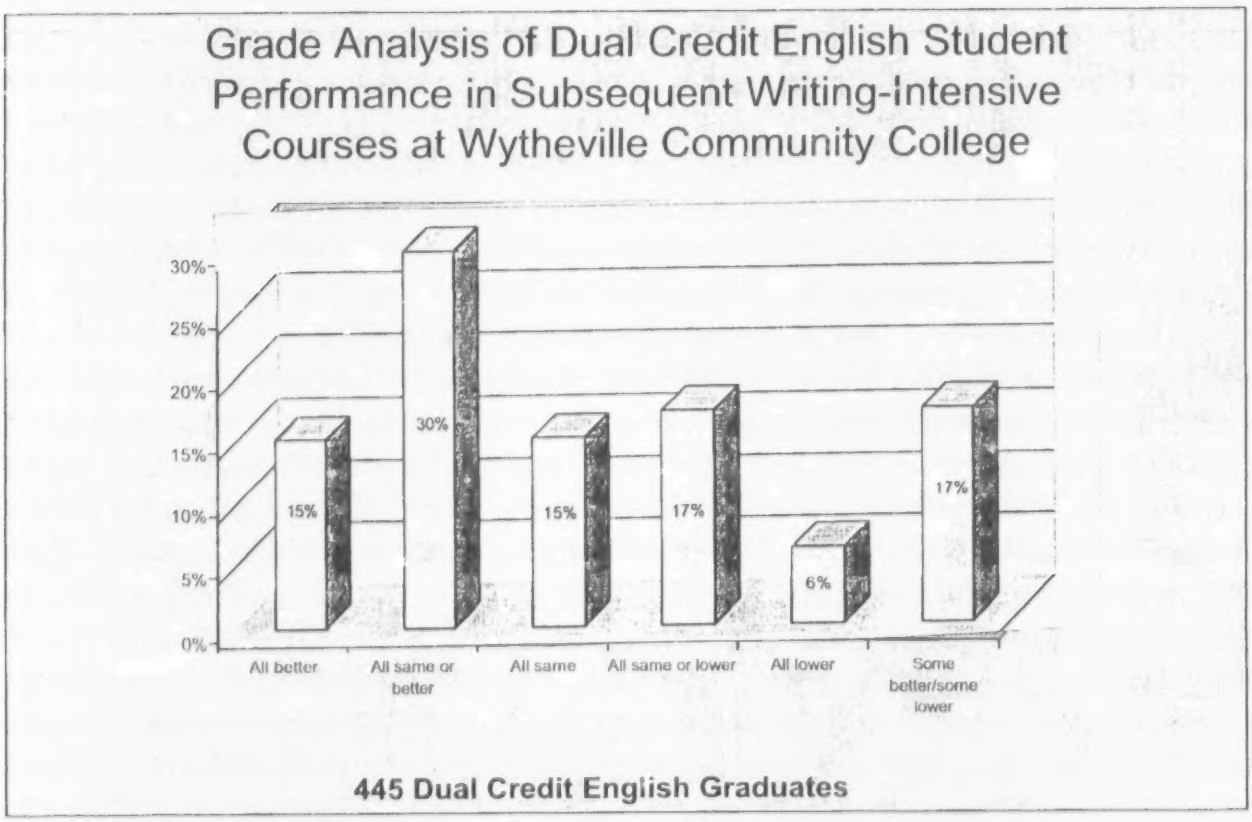
*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

Question #21: How often is your class time in dual credit English interrupted or canceled? What are the reasons for interruptions or cancellations?

Cause of Interruption or Cancellation	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
School activities (assemblies, programs, concerts, plays, school-related functions)	20	21%
Snow or inclement weather	19	20%
Senior information or activities	13	13%
Bomb threats	6	6%
Field trips	5	5%
School photographs	4	4%
Honor society meetings	2	2%
Announcements	2	2%
Pep rallies	1	1%
Other teachers looking for students	1	1%
Presentations by the guidance department	1	1%
Teacher/student conflicts	1	1%
Class not interrupted often	25	26%
Class never interrupted	11	11%

*Note: Each student could provide multiple responses, so numbers do not total 97 responses or 100%.

APPENDIX K



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EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Ed.D., May 2001. Virginia Polytechnic and State University. Blacksburg, Virginia. Major: Curriculum and Instruction.

M.A., May 1989. Radford University, Radford, Virginia. Major: English.

B.S., May 1987. Radford University, Radford, Virginia. Major: English; Minor: Journalism.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Coordinator of College Development and Public Information/Associate Professor. Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA. January 1999-present.

Associate Professor of English. English Department, Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA. August 1990-January 1999.

Adjunct Instructor of English. English Department, Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA. January 1990-August 1990.

Instructor of English. English Department, Radford University, Radford, VA. August 1989-December 1989.

Graduate Teaching Assistant. English Department, Radford University, Radford, VA. August 1987-May 1989.

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES

Editorial Board Member, *Inquiry: The Journal of the Virginia Community College System*. October 1997-present.

VCCS Professional Development Director Selection Committee, November 1999. English Peer Group Planning Committee: member 1992-2000, chair 1996-1998. As chair, responsible for all Planning Committee meetings; conference publicity; program scheduling; budget; program publications; on-site conference logistics.

Chancellor's Faculty Advisory Committee: member 1994-1999; vice chair, 1996-1999. Elected representative from Wytheville Community College; served as committee representative on the Presidential Selection Committee for the president at Piedmont Virginia Community College, October 1998; served as committee representative on the Presidential Selection Committee for the president of Eastern Shore Community College, 1996.

Instructional Leadership Seminar, August 1993.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Council of Resource Development, 1999-present.

Assembly on the Literature and Culture of Appalachia, 1990-present.

National Council Teachers of English, 1988-present

Two-Year College English Association, 1990-2000.

Appalachian Studies Conference, 1987-1999.

Virginia Association of Teachers of English, 1988-1995.

INTERESTS/LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Reading, writing, traveling, and spending time with family, friends, and five cats.

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